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IMPRESSIONS  
OF  
EARLY KANSAS

BY  
ELIZA JOHNSTON WIGGIN





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By  
ELIZA JOHNSTON WIGGIN



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No 1.



To my sainted mother—and the other  
unsung but heroic women who in the  
midst of discouragement and bitter trial  
builded their homes on the sunlit prairies  
of territorial Kansas, this little book is  
lovingly inscribed.



*And they found fat pasture and good,  
and the land was wide, and quiet, and  
peaceable.—Bible.*



## Chapter The First

### OLD WAVERLEY

As I sit by the western window and the brief winter afternoon draws toward its close, my mind turns back to dear old Waverley. Outside the wind is rising and the waning day shows gray and chill, but far away I see visions of a fair, deep blue sky, gemmed with fleecy floating clouds. Instead of deep snows and ice bound streams, are wide expanses of green fields, velvet carpeted, and sown thickly with johnny-jump-ups and dainty strawberry blossoms. Away over the far wooded hills, distance lends enchantment to the purplish haze that rests forever above the winding river; while around all is spread the fairest country that ever gladdened the eyes and hearts of men,—the beautiful prairies of Kansas.

Among the many towns and embryo cities that sprang up as it were by magic on the opening of the territory in eighteen fifty-five, was my own dear town of Waverley. This ambitious little county seat was laid out in true generous Western fashion over a square mile or so of charming hill and dale, its modest frame houses, many of them built of the native black walnut, separated by wide stretches of greenest verdure. Here and there the streets led over picturesque wooden bridges, for from the hilly eastern border to the noble plateau that formed the western boundary, there was a succession of hills and hollows, varied by deep, winding ravines, each of which prisoned a brawling, pigmy torrent during the winter thaws and the spring rains.

Crowning the brow of the eastern hill, was the Woodson Hotel, a many windowed frame building of two stories, looking south. In front was a wide veranda from whose pleasant shelter the wayfarer could overlook the little city and the broad wagon road with its traffic and bustle, varied now and then by slow moving ox teams, or long lines of canvas covered wagons of the countless home seekers. These wagons were filled with furniture and bedding, weary women and sunburnt children. Sometimes a stove pipe protruded through an opening in the canvas telling of an attempt at warmth and comfort when the prairie winds blew cold. Buckets and pails dangled underneath and the faithful dog



plodded along behind. Often there were cattle and horses driven by shouting men on horse back, well booted and spurred, while boys of all ages, usually barefooted and shaggy of hair, closed the familiar and never-ending procession.

Occasionally we would see a sturdy sunbonneted girl of twelve or fourteen trudging along, stick in hand, driving the family cows, and many curious glances were exchanged between us. It would be interesting to know how many of the first families of Kansas had thus passed through the streets of old Waverley to their waiting homesteads further west.

The great event of the day was the arrival of the stage coach from the East. Announced half a mile away by a prolonged blast of the horn, this lumbering vehicle, drawn by four horses, would dash up to the hotel with a last grand effort of the tired beasts and a prodigious cracking of whips. The hotel loungers were always in their places to take close note of the passengers as they emerged from their cramped quarters,—bearded men in queer high hats and long-tailed coats, ladies in deep round bonnets, shawls, and enormous hoopskirts, all tired and travel-stained and glad indeed of the hospitable hotel with its promise of rest and refreshment.

Across the alley was the great hotel stable, where the stage horses were cared for and a general livery business carried on. The stable yard was crowded with vehicles of various kinds and full of bustle and fun, the lazy negro hostlers often stopping their work to listen to the jolly stage drivers and their stirring news from beyond the big river.

Mrs. Woodson, the landlady, was an active, handsome woman in the prime of life. Indeed she looked very young to be the mother of the quartette of young lady daughters whose willing hands lightened her labors, and whose bright eyes were the magnets that drew to the hotel many of the bachelors who had come west to seek their fortunes and to lose their hearts. Theirs was the first hotel in Waverley, and tradition has handed down some all too scanty accounts of the gay doings within its walls. Mrs. Woodson, in addition to her duties as landlady, took an active part in all the various enterprises of the little city, and so impartial was she that whether the



event were a dance among the gayest of the gay, or a solemn prayer meeting for the most devout, it could not be properly launched and carried through without her presence and assistance.

In early times, a company of United States soldiers was stationed at Waverley. The captain and other officers were guests of the hotel, and as the first of a series of social functions in their honor, Mrs. Woodson and her daughters decided to give a grand ball, which was to be the finest event in the history of the place, if not of the territory. A large number of guests were invited and little else was thought of or talked of among the beaux and belles but the ball and the delightful preparations for its full enjoyment. The long looked for night came at last, bright starlight but intensely cold. The merry jingle of sleighbells over the snowy streets announced the arrival of gay parties, who came from all directions, and by nine o'clock the parlors, halls and barroom were crowded with the beauty and gallantry of half the county. The officers, resplendent in their new uniforms, were, as usual, irresistible to the gentler sex, and the envy and despair of less fortunate men. All the stores in town had been ransacked to furnish suitable finery for the event. Among other articles there was an unprecedented demand for shoe blacking, and the supply, unfortunately, was soon exhausted. Frank Hammond, one of the society lions, hurrying into town toward night, was unable to obtain a box for either love or money. He stared at his muddy feet in despair, while visions of the faultlessly attired officers, capering before the admiring gaze of his sweetheart, flashed into his mind's eye. Something must be done. At last, driven by desperation, he made his way to the rear of the hotel, where at the sight of the big black range, he was seized with a sudden flash of inspiration, and slyly ignoring the dark frown of the negro cook, he finally succeeded in blacking his high-heeled boots from the bottom of a kitchen stove lid, after which he entered the ball room in triumph and found the dancers just taking their places for the first quadrille. The rooms were brilliantly lighted, and presented a most delightful picture, while gay laughter and merry repartee were heard on every hand. The ladies were sparkling and most attractive in their gay plaid and flowered silks, mousseline de laines



and soft challis. One challis gown worn on that occasion has been handed down and is still cherished for its exceeding beauty,—a dark, rich maroon ground, covered thickly with lovely flowers and figures in nearly every tint, from ivory white on through the whole gamut of color, all so cleverly blended that the effect was that of restful beauty and harmony—a perfect symphony in color. The skirt was made very full and the waist was very close fitting with puffs on the shoulders. This gown was worn by Mrs. Hamilton, who was a fair-complexioned Kentucky woman with black hair and velvety black eyes; and with it she wore a wide collar of the finest embroidery, fastened in front with a large gold brooch.

The music for the dance was furnished by that prince of pioneer fiddlers, Mark Conway, who was a host in himself, and the dance went on and joy was unconfined until after midnight, when all were invited to the dining room to partake of a sumptuous supper, prepared by the indefatigable hands of Mrs. Woodson, assisted by Aunt Mellie and Aunt Sophy, two noted negro cooks.

The note of tragedy, however, came very near to intruding on this joyful occasion. Mrs. Brooks had brought with her her baby daughter, Mary, whom she hushed to sleep, and then laid carefully on the large bed in one of the ladies' dressing-rooms upstairs. Mrs. Brooks was very gay and witty, and a general favorite, and she danced every quadrille until nearly midnight, when she ran upstairs to look after her baby. Imagine her horror to find her darling buried beneath a pile of shawls and furs and gasping for breath. One after another of the laughing, hurrying groups had thrown off their wraps, not noticing the sleeping baby, whose mother rescued her not a minute too soon. All in all, however, the ball was voted a glorious success, for in addition to the dashing officers, there were plenty of other beaux and of a good sort, too—young doctors, farmers, lawyers, merchants, some of them graduates of eastern and southern colleges; and so there were very few wall flowers or other forlorn damsels in those good old days in Kansas Territory.

\* \* \* \*

Waverley, which was founded in the middle fifties, was laid out in the beautiful old-fashion



around a grassy square, vacant then, but destined to contain later the County Court House. On the streets north and west were two hotels, half a dozen stores, a saloon or two, and a blacksmith shop, alternating with modest frame dwellings and vacant lots. Here one bitter winter day, when Waverley was only a few years old, came the great Abraham Lincoln to address the people on the momentous issues of the hour. An old-time newspaper correspondent thus describes the scene: "The weather was intensely cold. The sweeping prairie wind rocked the crazy building, and cut the faces of the travelers like a knife. Not more than fifty people assembled in that little bare-walled Court House. There was none of the magnetism of the multitude to inspire the long, angular, ungraceful orator, who rose up behind a rough table. With little gesticulation, and that little ungraceful, he began, not to declaim, but to talk. His fairness and candor were very noticeable. He ridiculed nothing, burlesqued nothing, misrepresented nothing. His anecdotes were felicitous and illustrative. He was too kind for bitterness and too great for vituperation. The address lasted an hour and three-quarters. Neither rhetorical, graceful nor eloquent, it was still very fascinating. The people of the frontier believed profoundly in fair play and in hearing both sides, so they now called for an aged Kentuckian, who was the heaviest slave holder in the territory. Responding, he thus prefaced his remarks: 'I have heard during my life all the ablest public speakers, all the eminent statesmen of the past and present generations; and while I dissent utterly from the doctrines of this address, and shall endeavor to refute some of them, candor compels me to say that it is the most able, the most logical speech I ever listened to.'" Tradition also says that after the meeting Mr. Lincoln visited all the stores in a vain search for a pair of Arctic overshoes but could find none large enough.

So spoke in the little frame court house to a handful of shivering people, the man who, within a very few years, was to sweep at the head of a new party into victorious possession of the policies of the country. Noble-hearted Lincoln! Waverley hearts yet thrill with pride at the memory of his brief visit.



The "aged Kentuckian" who replied to Lincoln, was not a Kentuckian as it happened, but a native of Virginia. Colonel Francis Carroll, on the opening of the territory, left his southern home and settled with his family and a number of negro slaves on the Kansas prairie. Here he bought large tracts of land and soon became one of the best known of the pioneers. He was a man of commanding appearance, well educated, of ample means, who brought west with him all the inherited traditions of the Southern aristocrat and his home, merry with the voices of children, and presided over by his charming and cultivated wife, was known as the abode of good cheer and princely hospitality. The gallant Colonel was a familiar sight to all the settlers for miles around. Tall and erect, and a born horseman, he sat his mount like a Centaur, and was usually accompanied by a negro slave whose duty was to open the gates and look after his master's dogs and hounds, whose pedigrees and fine points the Colonel never wearied of discussing. He was, of course, an excellent shot, and in the stormy days before the war always went armed, his skill with the pistol giving rise to marvelous stories, for his nerves were like steel and the glance of his proud eye majestic as that of the eagle. I remember him well, as they were near neighbors. The eldest daughter, Hester, to whom I looked up as a being altogether superior, was much away from home, at school in Maryland or Virginia, but her younger sister, Grace, was my great friend and many happy hours we played together with sticks of wood dressed as dolls. The Colonel always called me his "little sweetheart," whereupon I stopped my play and ran like a deer for home, for I was terribly afraid of him and very fond of him at the same time.

I recently listened to an old negro who in her youth had been one of his slaves, as in reminiscent mood she recalled the happenings of the stirring times before the war. He often in the fall gave delightful hunting parties lasting several days. On these occasions he and his guests would rise at dawn and after a hurried breakfast gallop away in the glorious October air exhilarating as wine, as with horses and deep-mouthed hounds and winding horn they scoured the beautiful prairies and timbered streams in true hunter's style. Not till night-fall did they return, the



negro boys laden with game which provided a sumptuous dinner, while the adventures and mishaps of the day's sport were recounted with jest and merriment around the well-filled table. Many a generous hamper was sent to his neighbors, while the sick and unfortunate were not forgotten. And now lest my pages seem to bristle overmuch with military titles, let me say that only when these were really used have I employed them. Ancient Waverley, among other courteous old-time delights, was rich in titled citizens, having a generous supply of "squires" and judges, an occasional captain by way of variety, and at least one colonel for every hundred or so of her population.

Another charming custom of Colonel Carroll's was to entertain, every session of court, the district judge and the resident and visiting members of the bar, and these delightful dinners are recalled with pleasure by all who partook of his generous hospitality. He was a staunch Episcopalian and a typical southern gentleman of the old school. One time Colonel Hamilton, a friend and brother lawyer, was spending Sunday evening at the Carroll home. The conversation had wandered from horses and dogs and famous hunting parties to the realm of politics and state craft. Colonel Carroll had been fortunate in knowing many men distinguished in public life, and the wood fire burned low and the time flew fast as in his usual happy vein he discussed men and events, both past and present. At a late hour the visitor arose to take his leave, but was recalled by the Colonel who, to the surprise of his guest, took from its shelf his large print book of common prayer and insisted on reading before they separated, the psalter and appropriate prayers for the day. A little thing, perhaps, but it showed a side of his nature which he reserved only for his nearest friends and hid from the unsympathetic world about him. Colonel Carroll was a true gentleman. Always deferential to women of whatever age or station, brave and high-spirited to a fault almost, he was one of those rare men who bring to mind thoughts of the crusaders and the noble knights of old, and with them a half sigh that the days of romance and chivalry are no more. As was said of them, so may the hope be breathed of him and his companions—



"The knights are dust,  
Their good words rust,—  
Their souls are with the saints we trust."

\* \* \* \*

The shabby old court house in which Lincoln spoke stood on the street north of the square. When the new court house was built early in the sixties the old building was enlarged, a story or two added, and it was transformed into a hotel called the Irving House, and as such it did duty for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Irving were Yankees from far away Martha's vineyard. He, big of body and of a genial disposition, was a general favorite; she was a frail little shadow of a woman who, some predicted when she first made her appearance in Waverley, would not live six months, but these false prophets little knew the courage and Spartan endurance hidden in that tiny frame. They soon had their hotel in apple pie order and generations of guests have come and gone and testified to its excellence. Not content with the onerous duties of landlady, Mrs. Irving became very prominent in the social life of Waverley, and few winters of her long residence passed without parties, balls, oyster suppers and various entertainments that won for her the reputation of a delightful hostess.

Among the employees of the hotel I remember well a queer, gray-moustached old Frenchman named Pierre Lameroux. Pierre's duties were many and varied. He bought the food, shoveled snow, raked the yard at the side and back, cleaned the office and halls and kept up the bright wood fires in the dining room, office and parlors, upstairs and down. For many years he was a familiar figure to us school children as, market basket under his arm and puffing at his faithful pipe, he meandered to and from the grocery stores and meat market, speaking to none except on business.

Unlike the City Hotel, the Irving House never rang a dinner bell, but three times a day, with unfailing regularity, Pierre would issue from the front door, gong in hand, and with deafening clamor and a look of vast importance, rouse the slumbering echoes of the quiet street with the cheerful announcement that another meal was ready, while from office, store and workshop, and from the court house across the street, has-



tened the hungry guests to the well spread table in the large, pleasant dining room.

\* \* \* \*

Early Waverley was fortunate in hotels. On the west side of the square was still another called The City Hotel, a tall brown house with sharp pointed gable windows in the attic over the second story. The landlord was Mr. Jerry Brown, a quiet old gentleman whom we always called "Uncle Jerry." He often had candy in his pockets for us and he never forgot us at Christmas. He gave little Lizzie Hamilton a beautiful china doll, winning thereby her lasting love and gratitude. "What shall I name it?" asked the little five-year old. "Hattie," replied her father. Lizzie then appealed to her mother, for surely such a beautiful doll, like a royal infant, deserved a variety of names. In a spirit of fun, Mrs. Hamilton suggested "Melissa," and so the precious doll was christened, and "Hattie Melissa," with her clear blue eyes and rosebud mouth, became a cherished member of the family. Never was a doll more beloved, but in course of time accident finally demolished her, though her name and memory, with that of her little gray and brown frocks so exquisitely fashioned by loving hands, still survive, and with them grateful thoughts of the gentle-hearted old man who never forgot the children.

"Aunt Susan," as we called Mrs. Brown, was a rather grim looking woman, dark and somewhat stern, though kind, too, in her way. She said little but looked diligently to the ways of her household and was a terror to evil doers. Her cook for many months was a sort of character, an illiterate Irish girl, who had drifted into Waverley from some unknown place and worked in nearly every house in town. This poor creature was the object of much ridicule, possessed an insane temper and was sadly addicted to the use of bad language. Being frightened out of the big hotel kitchen one afternoon by her violence vented on the offending supper fire, we repeated to Aunt Susan some of the very picturesque expressions we had heard. To our surprise, however, she made some faint excuses for Martha, saying among other things that she had no mother when she was young to "slap her face" and tell her such talk was wrong.

We thought the hotel parlor was very fine



with its dark red two-ply carpet and walnut "whatnot" in the corner, crowded with a collection of the most interesting articles, mostly of china and plaster, entirely too fragile for us to handle. Best of all were several large, beautiful shells, in which we could distinctly hear the murmuring of the great, wonderful ocean, which we had heard of but never expected to see. The two tall windows, side by side, looking across the busy street to the Court House Square, had beautiful full lace curtains, a last touch of elegance not very common then in Waverley. The chairs set primly against the wall, were of black walnut with cane seats, and a cheerful wood fire blazed and snapped in the handsome polished stove.

From the bar-room across the hall (though there was no bar), came sounds of laughter and debate, but we well know that was no place for little girls, and never ventured in there except sometimes for a few minutes with father, as he stopped on his way home from church or prayer-meeting, for he and Uncle Jerry were great friends.

But after all, the best place was the big, cheerful dining room into which bar-room, parlor and hall all opened. Here the long table with its shining glassware and its massive silver plated casters looked very attractive indeed, and surely there never were anywhere else such delightful suppers as here—such flaky biscuit, such mince pie, and above all, such savory beefsteak. Aunt Susan possessed in utmost perfection the mystic art of seasoning, and no high salaried chef since then has ever surpassed the delicacies she served to us. We did not eat there often, however, so that each visit became a delightful memory. After several years these good old people moved away and the hotel passed into strange hands. Once, years after, under the new regime, our Sunday School class, which gathered each week at one of the homes to do fancy work, met in the old hotel, where to my surprise we were ushered upstairs into a spacious, well-furnished parlor of whose existence I had never known, and I marveled greatly while diligently crocheting a sofa tidy that was never finished, that we had missed the exploring of this pleasant room in the time of Uncle Jerry and Aunt Susan.

As time wore on the business continued to move away from the eastern hill and concentrate



around the square, the pioneer hotel, the Woodson House, was finally closed to the public. But if its old walls could only have spoken, what tales they might have told, not alone of brave-hearted pioneers and anxious, loving women, but of youth and high spirits, of dance and revelry and Christmas gaiety, of the happy voices of little children, and at the last of the chill silence of death. Once when Lizzie Hamilton was very small she went to school in one of the upper rooms for a few days. The little tots, most of whom lived in two or three small rooms, all on the ground floor, stared about them with wide eyes as they marched up to the stately stairway and through the long hall, quite awe-struck by the unaccustomed distances and the many rooms on each side opening to their curious view. Bitterly cold these rooms were, too, when the piercing winter winds, sweeping over the wide prairies, held high carnival among the gables and chimneys and rattling casements. Only a few of them had fires, and Susie and Ellen Woodson who did the upstairs work, were obliged to wear thick woolen mittens to protect their numbed fingers as they hurried through their chilly task.

While my early impressions of these ancient hostelries are principally those of jollity and hospitable good cheer, it is nevertheless true that with them also is connected my first acquaintance with the sadness of death. I must have been about four years old when Mrs. Irving's only daughter sickened and died. I can just remember stealing softly with a group of bright-faced school girls into the darkened parlor to gaze for the first time upon the mystery of death. The child, Lizzie, a beautiful and universally beloved girl of fourteen, lay as if asleep in her dainty silken bed. It was winter and of course there were no flowers, but kind-hearted Malvina Field had placed a large cluster of artificial blossoms within the waxen fingers. Hushed and awe-struck, we remained only a few minutes, but for weeks the memory of that lovely, silent face haunted my thoughts. Thus it came to pass that even my first impressions of death in old Waverley were closely associated with a sad and sacred beauty that time has never effaced.

The first funeral I remember was also connected with a hotel, the pioneer Woodson House. After eight or nine years of busy, useful life as



landlady, Mrs. Woodson, still a young woman as years go, was stricken with a fatal illness. A wondering child of tender years, I can still dimly recall the throng of sad-faced mourners, the solemn hushed silence broken frequently by stifled sobs, and the mysterious casket in the center of the large dining room. Here where she had so often been the life and inspiration of busy activities and gay festivals, the last sad rites were held, and from its shelter they bore her body to its final resting place in the distant windswept cemetery.

The Woodson girls had by this time gone to homes of their own, and after one or two years the still sturdy old pioneer was forced to yield its place to its down-town rivals. It had been occupied for some time by a number of different families when it was burned to the ground one freezing January day. Not a trace of it remains,—not a vestige of the old stable yard, where, in the busy bustling days before the war, loungers and hostlers, soldiers and truant schoolboys, discussed the events of the hour, and swapped horses or jacknives. The beautiful bluegrass has long since carpeted with velvet verdure the scars of foundations and cellars, and pleasant homes with their green lawns and waving trees now occupy the sites of those early buildings which served well their day and generation and with them are no more.

The two down-town hotels were rivals, too, but in a very quiet and peaceable way. The Methodists and their friends were staunchly loyal to the City Hotel, as Uncle Jerry was one of their number; while the Presbyterians, whom some suspected of being too aristocratic in feeling, adhered to the Irving House for similar reasons. Indeed, those early day hotels of old Waverley were very fascinating places, and their story, if it could be told in full, would include almost all of the history of the little community, so identified is a hotel in a "greene country towne" with the public and private life around it.



## Chapter The Second

### A SMALL JAYHAWKER

Many of the homes in Waverley were set back from the street in large grounds, which added greatly to their beauty and charm, especially when the trees which the first settlers had diligently planted, had grown large enough to cast a delightful shade. Many of the trees were transplanted from the banks of the Elkhorn, a winding picturesque creek a mile or more away. The more pretentious homes had white "picket" fences all around their grounds. Others had the pickets only in front, while ordinary four or five board fences enclosed the sides and rear. The barbwire abomination was, happily, entirely unknown.

The square in the center of the town was a level, grassy quadrangle, and here early in the sixties was built a fine brick court house, two stories high, with the stairway on the outside. A wide hall ran through the center of each floor, on one side of which downstairs were several offices, while on the other were the gloomy cells of the county jail, three or four in number, with high grated openings through which the prisoners could just manage to peer into the corridor, which was used as a sort of thoroughfare from one street to the other.

Colonel Hamilton's law office was in the court house and here the little runaway, Lizzie, would often put in her appearance, sometimes arrayed faultlessly in a spick-and-span pink and white calico frock, but often barefooted and generally disheveled, her detested sunbonnet in one hand and her little round comb in the other, having slipped away unobserved from her busy mother. Lizzie and the poor prisoners in those mysterious cells were very good friends. She was vaguely aware that there was something amiss about them, but when on her quiet entrance they called out a cheery welcome, she would edge shyly up to the high gratings and listen intently to their compliments and answer their questions with the best grace she could muster. For them, doubtless, the child's coming helped to break the monotony of their long, dull day, and they often gave her some little trifle, a picture card, a top or some other toy whittled out with considerable



skill in their all too many leisure moments. As for Lizzie, she was charmed with these treasures, and when her father, finding her loitering in the hall, would sharply send her home, she would run swiftly away to show her mother the "present" held tightly in her little pink palm. Mrs. Hamilton, divided between horror and amusement, frequently remonstrated with Lizzie as to her roving propensities, but to very little avail—the child was an incorrigible runaway, though as there was in those days no railroad in Waverley, and tramps were entirely unknown, she was about as safe wandering around the town as playing with her little sister Lulu in the yard at home.

\* \* \* \*

Wild flowers abounded in the green fields and hillsides around Waverley. Among others there were gorgeous sweet-williams, modest johnny-jump-ups, and the sweet, dainty strawberry blossoms. Fragrant wild roses, too, beautified the spring roadsides; but cultivated flowers were very scarce. Mrs. Dr. Clayton had several magnificent snowballs on each side of her neat brick walk, while Mr. Howe's lawn, near the court house, boasted some beautiful roses which were the pride of their owner's heart. One bright Sunday morning in June, Lizzie, fresh and dainty in her best pink and white lawn, started to Sunday School, of which she was very fond. One tiny hand held her little round fan, and in the other was the pride of her heart, a small silk sunshade, which she held over her head very straight indeed, in blissful unconsciousness of the whereabouts of the sun. When she passed Mr. Howe's neat white fence, her beauty-loving eyes peering curiously, as usual, through the pickets, caught sight of the roses nodding gaily in the sweet morning breeze, and as there was no one near to forbid, the little Vandal walked boldly into the yard and in full view of the front windows began to strip the bushes of their odorous burden. She had gathered only a few, however, for the thorns were numerous and sharp, when Mr. Howe caught sight of her as he was peacefully finishing his after-breakfast cigar, and hastening to the rescue, he very kindly pointed out to the small trespasser the evil of her ways, and leading her to the gate started her once more toward the forgotten Sunday School.

Colonel Hamilton often took his little daughter



with him to church and prayer-meeting, or better still, to visit his friends on business or pleasure. So one pleasant spring afternoon, when the grass was beautifully green and the air sweet from the recent rain, they walked hand in hand down the long sloping hill through the negro settlement of little white-washed cabins, and on a half mile or so past one or two farm houses, to where a number of snowy tents were clustered along the roadside. When her father started to enter one of these, Lizzie drew quickly back, panic-stricken, with a confused idea that for her numerous sins, the oft-repeated maternal threat of "giving her to the Indians" was now become a dreadful reality. She knew well that tents could mean nothing else than Indians, and she had no intention of walking in upon a group of blood-thirsty savages. But her father assured her there was no danger, and at last, holding tightly to his hand and with a fast-beating heart, she ventured in. To her astonishment there were indeed no signs of Indians; the tent was occupied by a number of white men who seemed pleased to see them and greeted them with much cordiality. There were tables in the tents and beautiful rugs spread on the grass, and above all, the most delightful little chairs, covered with roses like Mrs. Carroll's parlor carpet. But there were other wonders to come, for these dear little chairs would mysteriously open and close under the skillful manipulation of their genial host, who smilingly seated her in one of them. The gentlemen were soon absorbed in earnest converse, but Lizzie was indeed sorely puzzled to reconcile her ideas of wild Indians and tents with all this luxury and beauty and these pleasant gentlemen who patted her head and told her father with old-time courtesy that he ought to be proud of such a nice little girl. She never forgot this momentous visit to the wayside tents, which were the temporary abode of the engineers and surveyors who were planning the route of the railway that was some years later built through the county.

\* \* \* \*

The early settlers of Waverley were about evenly divided between Northern and Southern sympathizers. There were a number of charming Southern women who had left homes of ease and comfort to bravely take up the hard life of the pioneer amid stormy and uncongenial sur-



roundings. Their manners were so sweet and unaffected, and when they came to visit us how interesting the conversation was, and how the time flew as we listened to their soft voices, guiltless of the letter "r" and the quaintly characteristic "I do wondah," which we were sure to hear sooner or later. They really were well bred, if gentle courtesy, kindness, and a charming air of frankness constitute good breeding. In company all doleful matters, all sorrows and vexations, must be put aside, and nothing allowed to appear on the surface but an air of happy sprightliness that must have benefited the wearer, at least, even though assumed for the occasion. They made almost a religion of social life, even though their homes might be, as many of them were, only a rude log cabin of one or two rooms, hardly so good as their slaves had been accustomed to at home.

Among these ladies of Virginia and Kentucky descent and tradition was Mrs. Nelson, who was a genuine Kansas pioneer, coming to the territory in fifty-five. They settled on their claim with its typical log cabin, a mile or two from town, and here she worked hard and faithfully to make a home for her husband and two little boys. Mr. Nelson's law business took him from home a great deal, but his gently bred wife never flinched from her duty, although it led her into strange and often thorny paths. The hands, unused to any burden heavier than her embroidery frame, now learned to perform hard and often menial tasks, but they were done without complaining, for she was helping to build a home in the untried new country,—doing her part toward making the solitary places glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

There was a little coterie of choice friends in the neighborhood and they often met to compare notes as to their housekeeping and their gardens, and many a hearty laugh they enjoyed over their various mistakes and failures. The prairie winds blew so fiercely and so continuously, and the necessity for preserving their complexions was so strong within them, that they finally made thick masks of cloth to wear over their faces when out of doors, and over these their sunbonnets were tied so tightly that the playful Kansas zephyrs were baffled for once.

One stormy evening in the early spring when



Mrs. Nelson was alone with her two little boys, a rough-looking man, an entire stranger, rode hastily up to the cabin and dismounted, disclosing the fact that he was very much under the influence of liquor. He tied his jaded horse to a convenient fence post, and without waiting for the trifling formality of an invitation, staggered into the house, where he looked the astonished lady in the face and in no uncertain tones demanded supper. He then, still uninvited, ensconced himself in a comfortable chair by the kitchen fire to await its preparation, fortifying himself, meanwhile, by frequent applications to a huge, black bottle, which he carried in his pocket; then again critically examining a large and wicked looking knife, which he extricated from its hiding place in his shabby boot-leg.

Mrs. Nelson, who was both seriously alarmed and indignant at his intrusion, was hardly swift enough in her preparations to please him and at last, with a scowling face, he impatiently exclaimed, "*You ain't smart. My old woman would 'a had supper ready long ago.*" A day or two afterward she observed her little four year old son, George,, frequently stooping down and making some mysterious motions about his feet, and watching him, she was amused to see that he had secured one of the table-knives and had it sticking in the top of his little shoe, in comical imitation of their uncouth visitor.

Another disagreeable pioneer experience befell them when, one sultry night in July, a frightful storm came up suddenly and, after blowing open the doors, finally wrenched their swaying cabin from its foundation, and they were forced to fly for their lives, in the drenching rain, blinded by the lightning flashes and deafened by the crashing of the thunder and the screams of their terrified children as they stumbled through the inky darkness to the nearest shelter.

Mrs. Nelson was a very gentle woman in every respect. A neighbor who lived near her for years said that in all that time she had never heard her use an unkind or threatening word or tone. She was indeed gentleness itself, and not very well fitted, apparently, to be a pioneer of the dark and bloody days in Kansas. They were once during the war entertaining a party of Southern ladies and among them was a thoughtless young Kentucky girl who declared she was going out in the



yard and for fun shout "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!" just to see what would happen. She meant to do it, too, and it took the combined efforts of the ladies, seconded by Mr. Nelson, himself, to convince her that such a rash act might lead to very unpleasant consequences. To Mrs. Nelson, as to others, the war brought many sad and anxious hours. There was a painful scarcity of both food and clothing. In Waverley, to be sure, the Aid Society had established headquarters where both were furnished to those who applied, and some of the principal beneficiaries, it was said, were living on the fat of the land, but the Nelsons were among those who would not beg. Old clothes were cut down and made over for the boys,—she found a treasure in a discarded red woolen table-cover, which was made into a nice, warm petticoat for the little daughter. The boys were going to school,—healthy, hearty youngsters who brought the appetite of wolves to the beans and corn-bread and occasional dried apple pie, which formed the basis of most of their scanty meals. It was very hard to explain to them that they must continue to wear their patched and faded garments, while their playmates, arrayed in brand new suits from the Aid Society, jeered and laughed, and with the merciless candor of boyhood and ignorance, made unfeeling sport of their shabby caps and flour-sack shirts.

Whenever Mr. Nelson left home, she watched him out of sight with a sickening feeling of dread, not knowing that she would ever see him alive again, for there were those who sought his life in secret, and more than once only the timely warnings of friends had saved him from the midnight assassin, cruel and merciless on the wooded hills of Waverley as on the distant Pottawatomie. That was a time of dark and bloody deeds, when the wicked and the coward, ambushed behind a show of loyalty, could strike vindictively at those whom he feared or hated, and there was no redress.

We have heard so much of one side of the story,—let us glance just for a moment at the other. Mr. and Mrs. Cameron were respected citizens of ante-bellum Waverley, but as the war cloud darkened, old friends grew cool and they became aware that their loyalty was questioned, as both were Southerners. This feeling was particularly rampant in one of their impecunious



neighbors, who talked loudly of "damned rebels" whenever he came in sight of the Cameron's cosy and well-kept home. At last friends advised Mr. Cameron that a judicious and well-timed absence was the best way out of his disagreeable position. He finally consented to go away for a time, and accordingly made the best arrangements he could for the comfort of his wife, who was an invalid. Among other things he laid in a good supply of wood, as the weather was intensely cold. He had been gone but a few days when Mrs. Cameron noticed that her wood was disappearing at an alarming rate; and one day to her utter amazement she saw the aforesaid patriotic and chivalrous neighbor walking away from the wood-shed in broad daylight with his arms full of her precious fuel. Later on Mr. Cameron returned to Waverley and was allowed to gather up his belongings in peace and to sell his really valuable property for next to nothing to one of his loyal and thrifty fellow-citizens. Now and then vague and vagrant whispers floated about concerning lofts and attics well stored with costly goods; of fine watches and other jewelry that never saw the light of day and of bitter impecuniosity transformed with magic celerity into a wealth that seemed quite Croesus-like by contrast. One revered gentleman carried his righteous "bespoiling of the Egyptians" so far that he absent-mindedly, no doubt, carried off the belongings of several pro-slavery churches, and his wife who, as a dutiful wife should be, was in full accord with her husband's aspirations and ambitions, was heard to express the pious wish that the war might last until they could completely furnish their church!

There were other types of Southerners in Waverley who were very interesting but in an entirely different way from Mrs. Nelson and her friends. There was, for instance, Mrs. Mayfield, who weighed nearly three hundred, and whose broad, dark face was the very image of easy content and good nature. This good woman always wore around her shoulders,—for strictly speaking she had no neck,—a snowy white handkerchief fastened in front with an enormous brooch, and in her ears large hoops of gold. The Mayfields lived in a comfortable brown house only a short distance from ours. In the front yard were maple trees and tall asparagus bushes with their



feathery branches waving in the sweet summer breeze, undisturbed, for no one in Waverley ever thought of eating asparagus.

Here on winter evenings we used to assemble in the cozy sitting-room with its bright rag carpet, its old-fashioned bureau and the wide white-draped bed, for in those days the family sitting-room was often the mother's bed room as well. After some unimportant conversation we would begin to beg Mrs. Mayfield for one of her famous stories. At last after much coaxing, she would say in her slow, good-natured way, "Well, Bessie, bring me my pipe," whereupon she would fill the bowl very carefully and deliberately, pressing the tobacco down firmly with her fat little finger. At last when the pipe was going to her entire satisfaction she would commence one of her inimitable stories of ghosts and "tokens," of "ha'ants" and runaway negroes, and sometimes of monstrous snakes and "painters," as she called panthers. We, in the meantime, were sorely torn by conflicting emotions,—among which an overwhelming desire to burst into shouts of laughter, the fear of mortally offending our kind hostess, and an intense desire to hear the quaintly told story, struggled for the mastery. The last usually conquered, however, and we would listen with breathless attention until the clock struck the dreaded hour of nine, when we would reluctantly issue, shivering with fright, into the cold dark night, and once out of the yard with the hospitable door closed behind us, raced wildly for home along the deserted street pursued by phantoms of fright in the form of ghosts, hobgoblins, and most terrible and sinister of all, crazy men. We would burst in upon the family like a whirlwind, all our panic routed by the cheerful light and fire; and the next evening we were as anxious as ever to go and be terrified afresh. Modern parents are much too wise to allow their children to listen to ghost stories, but for all that I quite pity the child who has never known the shivering, half-horrified fascination of a real, old time ghost story, told with all the embellishments of one who firmly believes in the supernatural; and who has not torn himself reluctantly from the cheerful glow of lamplight and firelight, and plunged, inwardly quaking, like another Ichabod Crane, into the outer darkness, resolving that come what might he will never be tempted to stay so late



again, only to find himself the very next night in exactly the same predicament. Mother had often told us how she used to visit the cabins after supper and listen to the negroes' stories until she was afraid to run across the few rods' vacant space to the house. When I years and years afterward visited for the first time the picturesque old homestead and saw the ancient log cabins tottering to their fall, I thought of the dear little girl and her hurried flight in the darkness, some good old aunty holding a lighted candle at the window until the sound of the closing door told that "Miss Fannie" was safely inside.

Mrs. Mayfield, however, could talk on other subjects than hobgoblins and "painters." She had quite a fund of dry humor and was a very keen observer. Too unwieldy for many household tasks, she sat nearly all day in her comfortable rocker at the sitting-room window which commanded a good view of the street and nothing escaped her notice. Once she was visiting at our house when Hattie Mason, a poor girl who had formerly worked for mother, came in for a brief summer call. She was attired in the most splendid fashion, carrying a year's wages on her back. A much be-flowered and be-ribboned hat surmounted a flounced silk dress of brilliant hues, and in her kid-gloved hand she carried a gay silk sunshade. Mother was quite overwhelmed at the sight of so much magnificence and remarked about it after Hattie had sailed off, carrying her head very high. But Mrs. Mayfield was not at all dazzled by mere outward show; her sharp black eyes had penetrated, as it were, to the very foundation of the whole costume, and in her usual slow, deliberate tones she coolly drawled, "Did you see that there great big hole in her stockun?"

Another time she was telling us about a cousin whose husband was so unfeeling and stingy that he would not provide her with the ordinary necessities of life. She sighed as she dwelt at some length on her relative's hard fate, and at last, with the rich superfluity of negatives that so greatly distinguished her conversation, she sadly added, "He wouldn't git her no cloze, and she didn't have nothin' to wa'ar, and so she got so she wouldn't go nowha'ar."



## Chapter The Third

### SOME OLD KANSAS HOMES

In the palmy days of the Woodson Hotel, there stood in the adjoining yard a moderate-sized villa-like mansion with many windows and sharp-pointed gables decorated with an elaborate cornice. The two front doors opened on a pleasant veranda and a wide expanse of grassy lawn. For some reason the owner moved away at an early date, and after a time the gabled mansion, untenanted, began to take on the appearance of age. This was a favorite objective point of Lizzie Hamilton's runaway excursions, for it was in this house that she was born and some hidden charm often drew her wandering feet in that direction. Perhaps it was because the rich blue-grass grew taller and more luxuriantly here than anywhere else, and the birds sang undisturbed in the neglected trees. Be that as it may, Lizzie often stopped to peer curiously through the fast graying palings upon the alluring beauty of tall trees and waving grass, intensified by the unbroken stillness, save the melody of the birds. Long it stood deserted, that pleasant, roomy house, in its fine location quite remote from the noise and bustle of the busy square; an ideal home for an artist or a poet, had there been either in the little city. No one seemed to care for it in the least, except Lizzie, and she was gradually coming to the pass of bravery that at last emboldened her to explore the dingy interior with its stained and dropping plaster and creaking, uneven stairs. She looked all around the desolate empty room in which she was born, trying to picture it aglow with warmth and light, the noisy chatter of the other children, and in the far, shadowy corner the gentle mother with her dark-eyed babe. She had been told there was a great snow storm the day she was born, and she looked through the tall, staring windows, at the straggling apple-trees, trying to fancy all the space without filled with the beautiful, swift-flying flakes, while as night came swiftly on, the bright lights from the many windows of the nearby hotel gleamed mistily through the tumultuous storm.

Lizzie's house as she fondly called it, was never occupied long at a time, its tenants being usually some vagrant family who wintered there and



were off again in the spring. Some even declared that the place was haunted, as it grew more and more dilapidated and deserted, so that even the vagrants sought its shelter no more. After a good many years it was torn down and gave place to a pleasant, modern home whose inmates doubtless little dream of their fleshly and ghostly predecessors on that sightly corner of modern Waverley.

Lizzie had a sort of penchant for wandering about in the neighborhood of certain houses which for one reason or another attracted her childish fancy or curiosity. The homes whose doors were always open and where the children played around the yard, she passed carelessly by with scant attention. But a house set back embowered in trees and shrubbery, or one whose doors and windows were always closed and whose inmates were seldom or never seen, seemed to challenge her attention in a way that she was unable to resist. There was one neat white cottage near the square whose windows and even the front door were hidden by dark-green shutters, which in the hottest weather were never opened. She used to often go out of her way to walk past this place, and even made up her mind that she would like to be transformed into a fly for a few minutes, only that she might immediately investigate its provokingly mysterious interior.

Several blocks away was a weird looking house with a basement, almost black, having long since lost all traces of paint or whitewash, looking strangely sinister and out of place among the neatly kept white cottages around it. Its occupants were a childless old couple who never seemed to mingle with their neighbors, were seldom seen on the street, and never went to church. Now and then stray bits of gossip which were only half understood by the children would be heard, and these were nearly always accompanied by sundry knowing winks and sagacious nods which seemed to indicate the most wonderful and uncanny possibilities.

At last one evening in early spring Lizzie was sent for the first time on an errand to the old black house. When, after several timid knocks, the door was opened she vaguely expected to see a dim forbidding interior, festooned with dust and ancient cobwebs, with perhaps a grinning skull and crossbones by way of ornament; for the



veiled hints and mysterious allusions concerning the old couple had fallen into the fertile soil of a too vivid imagination. She was, however, actually disappointed when the door, opened by a neat, smiling old lady, revealed nothing more dreadful than a wide hall, handsomely papered, light and cheerful, and in the most exquisite order; a startling contrast to the forbidding exterior; and its mistress fully as different from the witch-like crone Lizzie had expected to see. The old couple were said to believe in spiritualism, and this had given rise to the many extravagant rumors which floated around among the Waverley gossips, that peculiar belief being regarded with a sort of wondering horror by most of the good people of orthodox Kansas.

On the noble western plateau of Waverley were many attractive homes; neat white cottages set well back from the quiet street in their ample grounds, surrounded by white picket fences or neatly trimmed hedges. Mr. Schemerhorn's house was one of the best of these, but it burned to the ground one windy March day, and I well remember my horror after the dreadful fright and excitement were over, when mother told me he intended to rebuild on exactly the same spot. I was sure there would be fire enough left in the smouldering ruins to burn down the new house, and no argument could convince me to the contrary. But the new house was built in time, a large square mansion of brick of two full stories, the stateliest in the place, and the scene of much delightful hospitality. I recall among other events a large evening party for the entire Sunday School, when the spacious, well furnished rooms upstairs and down were brilliantly lighted and filled with a joyous company of young men and maidens, old people and children, and happiness and merriment reigned supreme. Mr. Schemerhorn had no children, but as the efficient superintendent of the Sunday School for many years, he was known and loved by every urchin in the place. It was largely due to him that we little ones had now and then the rare delight of a picnic. This was an event looked forward to for weeks with the most eager expectancy, for among other charming things a picnic meant a delightful ride, in wagon or carriage, it mattered little which, to the pleasant woods, and when once there we were entertained and royally feasted in a manner that



some of us, at least, never forgot. After playing and shouting and swinging from some giant limb until we were tired, we gathered around the bountiful feast of delicious chicken and ham, the finest bread and butter, various tarts, pickles and delicious frosted cake. Last of all, but by no means least, large baskets of mixed candies were passed around by Mr. Schemerhorn, himself, his plain countenance fairly beaming with kindness and pleasure as he enjoyed our happiness. And then in the early summer twilight came the delightful ride back to town, and another precious memory enriched our childhood.

Not far from Mr. Schemerhorn's was the beautiful country home of Mr. Graham, the Presbyterian minister. This place was so far from ours that I used to regard it as a rare treat to walk past, and gaze my full at the broad expanse of velvety lawn, beautifully shaded by groups of elms and maples. A large gate opened on a winding driveway that led like a broad, dark ribbon to the house. This was built of dark red brick with its sharp pointed gable toward the road, and a wide veranda afforded a delightful view of the town and surrounding country. The house was not very large, but there was an unmistakable air of grandeur and elegance about this place, and a flavor of grace and high breeding about its inmates which invested all with a sort of subtle charm that time has never effaced. Mr. Graham was a tall, slender man of clerical aspect and much kindly dignity. We were indebted to him for the planting around the church grounds of a double row of beautiful Lombardy poplars whose stately, shimmering spires seemed continually breathing a Sabbath welcome to all who worshipped in the unpretentious little church. Mrs. Graham was a fair, handsome woman of early middle age, and the mother of two lovely young daughters. Evelyn, the elder, was tall and fair and dignified, like her father; Mildred was rosy and petite like her mother, and both were beautiful. They spent the greater part of the year at some Eastern school, so we saw very little of them; but one winter, at least, they attended our school. I can well remember once when we were all playing "house" Mildred chose me from among a crowd of eager candidates to be her "little girl," and my foolish child's heart almost burst with joy and pride. Whenever we sang or heard of angels, the image



of the Graham girls immediately came into my mind, and to this day I recall them as the loveliest sisters I have ever known. One summer day they attended a picnic in the country, which was rudely broken up by a threatened storm of wind and rain. To my delight they stopped at our house and asked for shelter, young girls of about twelve and thirteen they were then, in dainty blue and white gingham. When the storm was over and the scattering clouds with their ragged edges revealed once more the blue sky beyond, they unceremoniously removed their nice new "gaiters" and snowy stockings, and prepared to walk barefooted over the back streets to their home nearly a mile away. I am not sure, however, but what we suffered somewhat from this episode, as mother was more insistent than before on our taking care of our clothes, and often commended their example to our consideration when we were careless.

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As a rule the early settlers of Waverley were not overburdened with worldly goods, but still there were a few families whose carefully darkened parlors looked to us like fairyland itself. We used to embrace every opportunity to gaze with delight on Mrs. Glenn's beautiful best carpet, a Brussels, scattered over with exquisite wreaths of roses on a light background. This treasure was put carefully away every fall and striped rag carpet put down in its place. To possess an organ or a melodeon was an open sesame to the upper circles, while pianos were almost entirely unknown, there being but two or three in the township.

Mrs. Carroll's parlor was well furnished with a rich carpet, slippery horsehair sofa and chairs and a marble topped table in the centre of the room. This table usually held an album or two full of old-fashioned dim photographs of women in very shiny silk gowns with their hair over their ears; and a motley and fearsome array of bearded men. The painful lack of beauty displayed by these old-time albums before artists had become such consummate flatterers, invests many an otherwise pleasant parlor of my childhood days with a sort of murky and dismal gloom. The stereoscope and views, however, which usually accompanied the offending albums, made amends by their beauty and lifelike charm for the other's deficiencies in those respects, so that one seemed



in a way to balance the other. Most parlors in these days were papered in white "satin" paper, and on Mrs. Carroll's wall hung a large mirror resting on two antique glass knobs, and pictures in gilded frames were suspended from large-headed nails by rich red cord with heavy tassels, most gorgeous to behold. Steel engravings of Washington and his family were to be found in nearly every home, and wonderful enlarged pictures of the family relatives gazed serenely down upon us; the women usually with a long curl, sometimes two, that hung carefully over their shoulders, while the hair was piled high, with curls and "frizzes" over the forehead after the prevailing mode.

We had no enlarged pictures of relatives except a life size painting of father, but on our parlor wall hung a copy of "The Southern Beauty," which we thought a most appropriate name for the sweet pictured face with its crown of soft waving hair enriched like the others with the ubiquitous curl over the shoulder. In our unpretentious parlor, which usually went by the name of the "front room," were a couple of old-time slippery horsehair *tete-a-tetes*, the finest places imaginable to snugly ensconce oneself on a snowy afternoon when the fire burned bright in the old wood stove, which we said looked like the cathedral at Milan, and in that luxurious sleepy hollow, fortified with two or three red apples, or a bag of candy, pore over the enchanted pages of Doctor Croly's "Salathiel" or George Sand's fascinating and adventurous "Consuelo." Sometimes, by rare good luck, there might be a Peterson's magazine or two, while if nothing else could be found or borrowed, the faithful Cottage Cyclopedia or Rollins' Outlines of Ancient History was always available.

Shall I ever forget one wonderful day when the company had filed out into the dining room and I was left alone with the sleeping baby to sit by the fire or gaze out upon the snowy landscape as I pleased, until such a time as the guests should return from the feast and we children have our turn, for I was brought up in the good old days when children had to wait for the second table. However, I did neither, but presently began to rummage in certain drawers and presses in the parlor bedroom.

Suddenly, to my astonishment and delight, my



hand encountered a book hidden away among the folded garments, and I drew forth a green and gold volume of delightful size and thickness, entitled "Ravenia, or The Outcast Redeemed." I didn't know what an outcast was but I knew a book, and it is needless to say that the time fairly flew until the friends were back again in the parlor and I was free to demand an explanation of such an unheard of thing as a book in our house that I knew not of. New books were rarely bought, and that was almost as wonderful an experience as the finding of a secret door or chamber might have been to the daughter of a medieval castle who was sure she knew every foot of her ancient domicile. Some smooth-tongued agent had sold the book to mother, who had carefully hidden it from my prying eyes, but in vain. I wonder if any other Kansas girl has read "Ravenia, or the Outcast Redeemed," and if any copies are still in existence.

Of a very different grade of reading was the magazine which my dear father gave me on my fifteenth birthday. A delightful treat, new every month, was the "National Repository," with its high class fiction and its finely illustrated articles of travel, poetry and biography. I was very proud of it as my own magazine coming in my name, so I read all the heavier articles of criticism and politics, which otherwise I should probably have omitted. It, too, was often my companion in the sleepy hollow *tete-a-tete* of fond memory.

Then in our dining room was an ancient divan, upholstered in faded green, and bearing unequivocal marks of the rough handling of many children. One snowy evening Jessie Thompson, a tall, dark-eyed schoolmate, came to spend the evening with us and our two boy cousins who were visiting from the east. To our mutual astonishment Jessie and I had just learned that we were a sort of elbow kindred, the two boys being her cousins also. While the aunts and uncles were talking in the parlor we spent a jolly evening playing "blindman" in the kitchen and diningroom, five or six of us children, Annie, the colored cook, and last but by no means least, Annie's beau, Hannibal, a gigantic darky, black as the ace of spades.

Jessie noticed the two *tete-a-tetes* in the parlor and the old green divan in the diningroom. The



next morning as we were all standing around the red hot stove in the well-filled high school room waiting for the second bell, she suddenly bawled out at the top of her by no means gentle voice, and to my utter astonishment and dismay—"Johnston's is rich—they've got three sofys!"

To walk past the green-shuttered white cottage of the Bishop family a stranger would never imagine the treasures contained within its modest walls. First of all, in the carefully darkened parlor with its rich three-ply carpet and lace curtained windows, was the tall handsome book-case overflowing with the most interesting volumes of history and standard fiction. In the closet, safely hidden away (entirely too safely I thought) on the highest shelves, were piles of delightful old Harpers and Frank Leslies with their charming stories and pictures. How I longed to work my will on them, but they were very seldom disturbed, for Dolly was fonder of a good romp and visiting than of books.

Dolly had probably the best furnished bed-room of any girl in town in those days. The Brussels carpet was somewhat threadbare in places, having done duty in the parlor in Waverley or elsewhere for many years, but the large dressing table and commode made ample amends. They were of dark walnut, richly carved, with white marble tops, while the handsome bedstead was unusually tall, also rich in carving with the head of a beautiful woman looking from the center panel. In Mrs. Bishop's room on the other side of the house was a magnificent set of mahogany, as severely plain as Mary's walnut set was ornate, and the pride of its owner's heart, no other home in Waverley boasting anything at all worthy to compare with it.

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As I look back at old Waverley it seems that for a new town and a western town at that, there were so many women who lived in strict seclusion and were so seldom seen abroad, that it would be no stretch of the imagination to say that the place was unusually rich in genuine recluses. One of these was Mrs. Jeffries, who lived near Colonel Carroll's in a pleasant, roomy house, whose upper story had several interesting looking dormer windows, such as Lizzie Hamilton would have been delighted to explore had that golden opportunity ever presented itself.



One summer evening after their early supper Mrs. Nelson with her little daughter, Julia, went to call on Mrs. Jeffries, who was an old friend, though Julia had never seen her. As they walked homeward through the scented dusk the mother said, to discover what the child thought of her hostess, "Mrs. Jeffries is an old-fashioned kind of a lady, isn't she?" The little four-year-old, thus appealed to, looked up gravely into her mother's face, and without a smile and in a manner as quaint and old-fashioned as that Mrs. Jeffries herself, answered, "Yes, ma'am," slowly adding as a sort of after thought, "I was awful 'shamed of her."

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Mr. Jeffries was one of Waverley's pioneer saloonkeepers. I can still see the tall black letters on the big sign that stretched boldly across the front of his two-story frame building, "UNCLE TOM'S SALOON." This, of course, was long before the days of prohibition and Uncle Tom Jeffries was one of Waverley's substantial business men. Citizens in all stages of intoxication were often seen in the streets and alleys. Many of these unfortunates were men of intelligence and education, college graduates, doctors, and more especially lawyers,—for some reason the members of the legal profession seemed sadly addicted to drink. It was told of a young attorney, a member of a fine Southern family, that he wandered one dark stormy night into a hog lot, and, too drunk to realize what he was doing, lay down like a modern Prodigal Son among the swine and fell asleep. Some passerby, so the story goes, heard him late in the night complaining bitterly to his hoggish bedfellows, "Move over there and don't crowd me, don't you know who I am? I'm a Cary." When sober, which was seldom, this poor wretch was a polished gentleman, and to hear him on the Fourth of July read the Declaration of Independence in his full, round tones, was a rare treat.

Sometimes we children, on our way from school, would wickedly laugh at or otherwise annoy some poor wayside drunkard for the fun of seeing him rouse for the instant all his benumbed faculties and start fiercely toward us with clenched, uplifted fist and wildly muttered threats, only to stagger uncertainly for a few steps and then ignominiously fall flat.

"Old Lem Jones" was the euphemistic title



given to a grizzled, tough looking farmer who lived somewhere in the obscurity of the heavily wooded hills beyond Waverley, whence it was popularly supposed nothing good could emanate. It was seldom indeed that "Lem" came to town on business or pleasure without drinking himself into a violent frenzy. Along toward supper time the sounds of the customary uproar would give us to understand that he had started for home, and dropping all other occupations we children would run to look,—at a safe distance, however. Once safely in the saddle, leaving his jeering companions at the corner saloon, on he would come at the top of his horse's speed, a pitiful figure as I recall him now; his battered old hat of dirty white felt turned up on both sides and tied with a string; his loose shirt sleeves flapping in the wind, reeling in his saddle and yelling and swearing the foulest oaths at the top of his stentorian voice,—away he would gallop to his wretched home, carrying pandemonium and consternation wherever he rode.

In a week or a month he would appear again on the streets with a load of firewood, unharmed and unashamed, and ready for another debauch.

Occurrences such as this, that would not be considered too atrocious to tolerate for even a moment,, were then apparently accepted as a matter of course like frost in May, or any other unavoidable evil. Ladies and school-girls never appeared on the streets on convention and election days, when many of the best citizens had a habit of drinking to excess, though sober at other times. A new generation has come up in Kansas, many of whom have never even seen a drunken man, or a licensed saloon with its crowd of attendant loafers; so it is of little use to talk to us who remember those halcyon days of the saloon and the staggering wayside drunkard with his obscene and blasphemous tongue, about the failure of prohibition to prohibit.



## Chapter The Fourth

### OLD CHURCHES.

"There will be preaching in this house tonight at early candlelight," was the usual pulpit announcement in the days when Waverley was young, and it would seem to indicate a painful lack of time-pieces among the worshippers. The Methodists, as is usual with that wide-awake denomination, were early in the field. In the early days they had no church building, meeting first in the one-room school house, and afterward in an unused frame store-building on the side of a hill in a lonely part of town; the building, once a flourishing mercantile establishment, having been abandoned in the march of business toward the vicinity of the square.

There were no embellishments of any kind in that lowly temple; no clustered lamps, no organ. Hymn-books were scarce, and it was the custom for the minister to slowly read two lines of the hymn, and then pause while the congregation sang those two, then read two more, when all would sing again, and so on till the song was finished.

On cold winter nights, the large, bare room, with its staring windows and plain hard wooden benches, was but poorly lighted by three or four kerosene lamps which served to illumine a space around the rude pulpit and the big wood stove, leaving the distant corners, where the ungodly scoffers usually sat, in deep shadow.

One cold evening while a "protracted meeting," as the revival was called, was in progress, Mary Thomas and Anna Willis, little girls of seven and eight, had come early and were sitting demurely on one of the hard benches watching the people as they came in quickly, shivering with the cold, most of them standing for a few minutes by the red-hot stove before going to their seats. Some of the ladies wore velvet bonnets, handsome paisley shawls and huge fur capes, but many more had plain dark double shawls and warm, serviceable hoods or bright colored "nubys." Many of the men wore their old blue army overcoats with bright brass buttons. Some were there, however, who had plain, dark overcoats, and there were several glossy beaver tippets, and the minister and one or two of the



brethren even wore tall silk "stovepipe" hats, but these elegancies were confined to the favored few.

The services began by the singing of one or two familiar hymns; after which all knelt for the first prayer. Mary and Anna, incited by some spirit of mischief, knelt also in their dusky corner, and presently, imitating the prevalent custom of the more devout among the handful of worshippers gathered together in the poor building, began to give utterance to many fervent "Amens!" "Lord grant it!" "Come, Lord!" and similar ejaculations, interspersed with frequent but stifled bursts of laughter.

Retribution, however, was close upon Anna, at least, for at the close of the prayer, her father arose and led her, crestfallen and abashed, from the room, telling her sternly to go home at once,—that he was very much ashamed of her.

Poor Anna, decidedly dejected at this unlooked-for termination of the evening's enjoyment, ran as fast as she could along the deserted, snowy streets, all alone, as it seemed, under the frosty, starlit sky, and burst in breathless on the astonished home circle to find them popping corn and making merry around the kitchen fire. Not placing too much emphasis on this one lapse from rectitude, Anna was usually a very good little girl in church, and she knew all the old hymns by heart: "Come, thou fount of every blessing," "A charge to keep I have," "O happy day that fixed my choice," "Come ye that love the Lord," "Come holy spirit, heavenly dove," and ever so many more. There was another fine, old hymn whose length seemed interminable to Anna, probably because it was often sung after the long sermon when she was tired and half asleep, and which began, very appropriately, she thought, with the words, "How tedious and tasteless the hours," nearly everybody pronouncing the second word as though it were spelled "tejus."

Many of the congregation had a habit of groaning dismally at the end of every line or two, as though they found their religion a burden grievous to be borne, or perhaps it was the sight of the unconverted among them which forced the utterance of those bitter moans. There was one favorite song, however, which seemed to inspire them with more hope and cheer, the grand old Portuguese hymn, "How firm a foundation," for



it was always sung with a special vigor and fervor by those humble Christians. Shouting was very common among them at their revivals. I remember one night when the church was packed to hear a popular evangelist, that a man in the rear of the house jumped up and began to shout, and not being able to make his way to the front through the crowded aisles, he sprang up on the back of the nearest seat and in that way, stepping between the astonished people as they crouched to one side or the other to escape his feet, he reached the platform shouting and praying and calling upon God, amid wild excitement, which reminded the older ones of camp-meeting days in the time of the mighty circuit riders of Ohio and Indiana.

In the course of time the Waverley Methodists were able to build a new brick church, and among other up-to-date furnishings a fine, large chandelier was purchased. This was the subject of much admiration and of not a little apprehension as well,—some of the more timid among the good sisters refusing utterly to sit beneath its effulgent splendor until time and service had demonstrated its virtues and its harmlessness.

The next innovation was the installing of an organ, but this step was so bitterly and vigorously opposed by the old-fashioned, conservative members who regarded musical instruments as inventions of the evil one for their destruction, that it threatened for a time to disrupt the church entirely. The more progressive, or perhaps I should say the more modern element, carried the day, however, and the organ was triumphantly enthroned upon the platform to the great delight of us children; and with it a stylish and numerous choir, whose intricate anthems and new tunes to old hymns effectually silenced and subdued the stubborn old guard of the opposition.

My chief admiration was the organist, a large, fair girl with masses of brown hair and clear blue eyes. She wore a black velvet cloak trimmed with rich lace, and I never tired of watching her long, white fingers as they drew such delightful melody from the magical keys. One Sunday morning as I waited for my father after church I thought I would try to play my favorite, "Shall we gather at the river," on the organ. I knew the words and the tune perfectly, and in my secret heart I had no doubt that I could play it nearly as well as



Miss Wright herself. So I seated myself at the organ, unnoticed by the two gentlemen who were deep in some important converse. Imagine my disappointment when instead of my beloved melody I succeeded only in evoking such an appalling series of discords and thrice dismal squawks that after a few more trials I gave up in the deepest despair.

I consoled myself when I reached home by resolving to make my doll a velvet cloak with lace in the sleeves, like Miss Wright's. I knew it was very wrong to sew on Sunday, but the temptation was so great that I succumbed, and after dinner sneaked into the cellar with my precious velvet and lace. Here I wrought so diligently that in spite of dressmakings being an entirely lost art so far as I was concerned, I actually succeeded in producing an exquisite little cloak, with lace in the sleeves, all complete.

I was greatly delighted, and could hardly wait till morning to show my triumph to my playmate, May, who lived in the next house and whose doll of late had, by reason of her finer raiment, been rather crowing over my poor Hildegarde. Why I left that precious garment in the cellar all night I have never been able to determine, unless it was that for some occult reason I had established my doll-house down there and I thought the cloak should be in the house carefully laid on the empty Hostetter's Bitters bottle that masqueraded as a piano. Morning came at last and I ran joyfully down cellar to produce my treasure, but alas! I found it not. Unable to believe my eyes, I searched and delved into every dark nook and corner, but all in vain. Broken-hearted, I was compelled to give up in blank despair; and never, from that memorable, desecrated Sabbath to this day, have I fathomed the sad mystery of that deplorable evanishment.

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One summer the brick church was fitted up with some improvised desks, and a number of us attended a select school there taught by Mr. Leonard who ruled over twenty-five or thirty pupils of all ages. How proud I was of my new McGuffey's Fifth Reader and my little elementary Harvey's grammar. I can remember many of the reading lessons, and how little Jimmie Price, only nine years old, stumbled on "ducats," pronouncing it



"due-cats," thereby calling down upon his cowering head the withering scorn of the teacher.

Mr. Leonard was, in fact, a stern disciplinarian. He kept a stout leather strap in his desk, and woe betide the luckless urchin detected in mischief at whom it was thrown with unerring aim. He (or as it sometimes happened she) must, after jumping half out of the seat with astonishment and fright, arise and in deep disgrace carry the detested missile back to the offended teacher, and, conscious of the eyes and suppressed titters of the whole school, stand meekly by his side until the trouble was explained and fitting punishment meted out.

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The first church built in Waverley was the Presbyterian, a plain wooden edifice of neat and pleasing appearance. It stood in a large grassy yard, quiet and tree-shaded, and surrounded by the beautiful Lombardy poplars. There was a large vestibule from which two doors led into red-carpeted aisles. There was a window on each side of the pulpit, and the choir occupied seats on a high platform in the rear of the church between the two doors. Tall, many-paned windows on each side admitted the light, and when widely open in summer afforded charming glimpses of the grassy lawn without with the sunlight flickering through the branches of the sheltering trees and casting their trembling shadows all about. Many of my most precious childish memories are twined about this dear old church. How I loved, from my favorite seat next the window, to feast my eyes upon the exquisite, soul-satisfying beauty of gently waving grass and leafy trees; listening meanwhile almost unconsciously to the sonorous tones of the minister or the sacred songs of praise rising sweetly on the fresh morning air. All churches should be set in grassy places among the murmuring trees, and little children should look from the open windows and rejoice in the blessed blending of beautiful sight and beautiful harmony; while over all the landscape far and near, rests the quiet, never-to-be-forgotten charm of God's holy Sabbath. So it was with the old Presbyterian church of Waverley.

Mrs. Graham, the minister's wife, always occupied the same seat, and sat very erect, never turning her head in the slightest degree when anyone came in. To look around during services,



in Waverley, was a mark of the grossest ill breeding and lack of self-respect. No matter how tantalizing and suggestive of all charming possibilities the rustlings and flutterings of the newcomers might be, if they took seats back of you, you were doomed thenceforward to the pangs of unsatisfied curiosity, unless, indeed, you were so hopelessly lost to all the claims of decorum as to basely turn around and look in their direction,—a breach of etiquette which very few were hardy enough to commit. Many a time I have watched those stately, immovable forms, and wondered in my inmost heart if when I was grown up I could ever attain to such Spartan self-control.

It was strange but true that in the Methodist church we felt much freer to look around whenever the door opened. There, except among a select few, decorum had not reached quite such a lofty pitch, and also there was no denying, the atmosphere there lacked a certain intangible charm and flavor of aristocratic elegance and repose that seemed characteristic of the older church. There was not such a pleasant odor of scent, and the ladies' fans, as a rule, were not so handsome, nor were they waved with such stateliness and grace.

I loved to look at Mrs. Carroll as she walked up the aisle so quietly, always sitting in the same place. She usually wore some semi-transparent, gauzy costume like the old-time grenadines, and her hands were always faultlessly gloved. She invariably bowed her head for a moment in prayer, after which she would slowly open her large, lacy fan, and as she waved it gently to and fro, I could catch the faint, sweet odor of rose. Mrs. Carroll was a woman of culture and true refinement, a typical grande dame transplanted from her southern home to the wide Kansas prairies. She lived her quiet life, admired and honored by all who knew her kind and gentle heart, veiled as it was by a slight stateliness of manner, the natural result of her early education and environment. She, like others, had her sorrows, and bitter ones they were; though as a child I knew nothing of them. To me she was a lady out of a story-book, who lived an enchanted and beautiful existence, far removed from the ugly, humdrum cares of ordinary mortals.

I hardly think any other child admired the ladies' fans as I did. I shall never forget them, nor my intense desire for one of my very own,—



a real fan that would open and close and glittering with spangles. This was before the days of the cheap paper fans, and ours were plain round ones made of some kind of grass or straw with a faint, elusive fragrance that after all these years I can still dimly recall. They were sometimes embellished with a bright picture or a tiny mirror in the center, and the edges were usually sadly bitten and shabby long before the summer was over.

Some of the older, more motherly ladies who wore dark lawn dresses and carried a flower in their handkerchiefs, had round fans also, but they were of fine palm-leaf neatly bound with black ribbon and had shining black handles.

In the winter the air of the church was permeated with that elusive and delightful quality that comes from warmth and cleanliness and the spicy scent of furs, recently taken from the depths of fragrant trunks and boxes; and now that most of the fans were laid carefully away in the same receptacles, I transferred my affections to the ladies' muffs, with their dangling tassels and their small, enticing openings, so beautifully shirred about with rich brown silk or satin; often with a dainty, snowy handkerchief peeping from its cozy shelter. I remember how proud I felt of mother when she appeared one cold Sunday in her new furs and velvet bonnet trimmed with rich flowers and foliage. One or two fortunate girls owned children's sets of light furs, but the greater number were well content if they could have the loan of their mother's once in a while on very special occasions.

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Many of the ladies wore beautiful bonnets, gaily trimmed and with wide ribbon strings tied under the chin in the most captivating fashion. Waverley had no millinery store in those early days. I can remember the first one that was opened, and how foolish and unnecessary it seemed to me to have a whole store just for hats and bonnets and ribbons; and I gloomily predicted that Mrs. Warren, our pioneer in that field of endeavor, would never sell enough of them to make a living. Our hats had always come from Mr. Norton's general store. We thought they were beautiful and if, perchance, they were old stock and sadly lacking in Fashion's requirements, we enjoyed them in blissful ignorance of the dreadful truth. I can



still remember one or two of those ancient hats. One of mine was a yellow straw, trimmed with pink ribbon, and such an exquisite pink rose with its yellow center as natural as life, nestled cosily in its cluster of green leaves, with two or three half-opened buds. I immediately selected that hat from a number that father had brought home for mother's inspection, and the memory of that dainty rose has gone with me through life.

Another summer hat recalls memories that are almost tragic. I was very fond of blue, but was considered too dark to wear it; but after much pleading mother finally bought me a white hat trimmed with pale blue ribbon and white lilies-of-the-valley. It was very pretty and dainty and, moreover, it was my first hat from a real "milliner store." With what unconcealed impatience I looked forward to Sunday morning that I might burst upon the astonished and envious gaze of my comrades in all the splendor of my new chapeau. But alas and alas! Sunday morning dawned cloudy and damp, and by nine o'clock, when the last Sunday School bell rang, I stood in the doorway gazing through bitter tears at a steady, sullen downpour of rain. Nor was that all; but for five or six successive Sundays it rained in torrents, until my mind became so weakened by repeated disappointments that I do not now remember that I ever succeeded in wearing the cherished hat.

Another hat that retains its place in memory's mysterious niche belonged to Thirza Webb, whom we children called "Thursday" in good faith until we were half grown. This hat was very flat in shape and brown in color, but its most striking feature was a row of cylindrical, glass beads, an inch in length, golden-brown also which dangled all around the flat brim like a fringe. As I sat near Thirza, and as her slightest movement caused intense vibration among the beads, I never tired of watching that wonderful hat. Poor Thirza! She was a quiet, inoffensive child, an orphan, who lived with Mrs. White out in the country. Sometimes in the years that intervene I've had grave doubts about that hat; but she and I, at least, were well pleased with it then.

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The Presbyterian church also had a very interesting choir. It was composed of a half-



dozen or more elegant ladies and as many men. The leader, Judge Warren, was very stout and florid, with a broad, good-natured face set off by a gray moustache and iron-gray hair that curled, Jove-like, around his high forehead. I used to watch, open-mouthed, these singers as they glanced quickly from the book containing the words held in one hand, to the large note-book in the other, marveling greatly to hear the sopranos hold the high notes for an endless time, as it seemed, entirely undisturbed by the altos and bases singing their parts with great zeal and spirit; all finally in some inscrutable way joining in one triumphant finale with tremendous effect,—after which the congregation would draw a long breath and come back to earth again. The old-time Waverley churches prided themselves upon their fine music as well as upon the piety and respectability of their respective congregations.

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At infrequent intervals an Episcopal clergyman from one of the larger towns nearby would conduct evening prayer either in the court room or the Presbyterian church. There were several families of communicants in town and country, and they were always present with a goodly number of outsiders, for whatever it may be now, early Waverley was a church-going community. I think mother wanted us to see the historic service but she was afraid the unusual features might cause us to laugh, so she charged us with unwonted strictness that we must be quiet and not giggle nor whisper, no matter how strange the minister looked, and she tried to explain to our non-comprehending minds how he would be dressed. We started out, little girls of six and eight, very curious about this new kind of service and preacher we were going to see. The church was already well filled when we slipped quietly into a back seat, but the greater part of the congregation were strangers to us. There seemed to be an unusual silence,—not a whisper nor scarcely a movement among the worshippers. We noted with some surprise several of the townspeople whom we had never seen at church before. The platform was vacant, which was unusual, and we sat quietly watching the people and waiting for something strange and interesting, we knew not what. But after all of mother's coaching we



were totally unprepared for the startling garb of the tall, saintly looking man who walked alone up the long red-carpeted aisle and into the familiar pulpit. We gasped with astonishment and amusement but our desire to laugh was forgotten when, after a reverent pause, eloquent with meaning, he commenced the service by solemnly pronouncing those beautiful words which were in the far away hidden future to become very, very dear to us,—“The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.”



## Chapter The Fifth

## OLD FRIENDS

We children were always glad when Aunt Nellie came to help with the work. She was a large, tall woman, coal-black, and with all the dignity and self-respect of the old-time better class of slaves. Her head-dress consisted of a bright red bandanna handkerchief intricately knotted, and in her ears she wore enormous gold hoops. She and her life-long friend, Aunt Sophia, lived together in a tiny, white-washed cabin away down in the lower part of town, which was by common consent given over almost exclusively to the negroes. These two old ladies were not related but they had lived together in the greatest amity for years. Both, like all the other negro women, went out working by the day or week at washing, cleaning, or any other labor their hands found to do.

Aunt Sophia was a small, tidy negress, also very black and inclined to be much more gentle and religious than Aunt Nellie, who was in fact rather strong-minded and independent, so that despite our liking we stood somewhat in awe of her sharp black eyes and sharper tongue.

They were all very fond of their pipes, and no other tobacco was ever so fragrant as that they used to smoke around the kitchen fire, while they often told us old stories of slave times as we watched the circling wreaths and dreaded that bed-time would call us away. They always said they smoked to cure the toothache.

Another who sometimes worked for us was Aunt Chloe, who was a meek and humble soul afflicted grievously with a sort of palsy that kept her poor old gray head in constant motion. She was very fond of tea, and she never wearied of telling us how Mrs. Palmer once treated her. She had an unusually hard day's work washing a "wagon bed full" of clothes one sultry day, and Mrs. Palmer, after dinner, carefully and with malice aforethought, as Aunt Chloe always insisted, put the teapot up on a high shelf where the poor soul could not reach it when, in the sweltering afternoon, her weary limbs began to tremble and her head to ache for want of her accustomed stimulant. I am glad to remember that she always had free access to the teapot at our house, and



very often something to carry home with her in addition to her day's wages.

A jolly old creature, not quite so lady-like as Aunt Sophia and Aunt Chlo,e was old Aunt Columbia, who could be met almost any morning by those who were bestirring themselves early, striding along to her day's work, her ebon countenance radiating cheerfulness and good humor. She sometimes told us wonderful stories of how she reprov'd the delinquent darkies for their short-comings, and laid down the law to them; and often she announced with emphasis that she wasn't "afeard" of any of them. These stories of her prowess impressed us greatly at first, but as time wore on and we came to know her better, we used to discount them with a liberal grain of salt. She was exceedingly ignorant and once said to mother, "When I does just a common-sized washin' I cha'age six bits; but when I does an extry big washin', then I allus has to have my half-a-dollah."

The rowdy, however, among the negro women was old Aunt Sue, a tall, lank, raw-boned mulatto, who made not the slightest pretensions to gentility, either past or present. She had probably spent a good part of her life as a field negro, for she cheerfully worked with the men at the hardest labor, and her tongue, if rumor was to be believed, was as rough and ready as any of theirs. Instead of walking quietly along the street, speaking respectfully in answer to the greeting of the townsfolk, as the other aunties did, she jocosely called nearly all the men in the place by their first names; and woe betide the unfortunate who was so foolhardy as to attempt to bandy repartee with her. She owned her own little home and, unhampered by husband or conventionalities, brought up her family of several children by her own labor, as she was a very capable nurse in addition to her other accomplishments, and her services were nearly always in demand.

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Among the negro men of old Waverley, the giant blacksmith, Rhodes, in his leather apron, always smiling and respectful, was a general favorite.

Colonel Hamilton, a Democrat, was a candidate for the Legislature, and a group of men were one day discussing politics when Rhodes happened



along and someone inquired how he was going to vote,—certainly not for the Democrat.

"Gentlemen," said the sable descendant of Vulcan with a smile, "I'll tell you a story. Not long after the war a poor negro was trudging along the road that lead from Missouri to Kansas. He was very tired and his feet were swollen and sore, for the pair of stiff, new boots slung over his shoulder pained him so he could not wear them. The way was long, the summer sun was hot overhead and the negro's heart was heavy. Presently he heard behind the sound of horses' hoofs and before long the rider galloped alongside but not to pass without a word, as many others had done. Instead, he slackened his pace and, looking earnestly at the wayfarer, asked, 'Where are you going, boy?' The negro told his destination, and after some further questions the gentleman said, 'Here, you look tired and your feet are blistered. Do you get up on my horse and ride awhile, and I'll walk.' At this the negro, knowing his place, demurred, but the good-natured stranger insisted, got down from his horse and trudged along behind, while the exhausted negro mounted and rode until he was rested and able to resume his tramp with a lighter heart and the assurance that his destination was not far away and that he was already sure of one friend within its borders. Gentlemen," concluded Rhodes, "I was that poor black man and the horseman was Colonel Hamilton, and now you know why, Democrat as he is, he will always get my vote." Good old Rhodes; there is something very pleasing in the memory of his honest black face and cheerful voice.

Everyone, too, liked Uncle Martin, a small, meek-looking old gentleman whose many good qualities were in continual danger of being entirely obscured by the more aggressive character of his strong-minded spouse, Aunt Columbia, of militant fame. For many years he was the sexton of the Presbyterian church. On Sundays, clad in a neat but hreadbare black suit, he would ring the church bell with measured stroke, bowing respectfully meanwhile in response to the low-toned greetings of the incoming congregation, with whom he was a general favorite. This duty performed, he would seat himself in his corner near one of the doors, emerging when necessary to open or close the windows, or to attend to the two wood fires in winter; moving about so noise-



lessly and unobtrusively, and still so efficiently as to testify to the excellent training he had received in ante-bellum days in old Kentucky or Missouri.

There was one negro whom we often saw on our way to school whose name was Armitage, and who seemed to have no family or relatives. He was a slender, wiry mulatto, active as a panther. He was more noticeable because he wore his hair, which was curly but not woolly, very long, and in his ears were huge gold rings, all of which gave him a strangely foreign appearance that somehow seemed to have a mysterious tendency to make one's mind wander in dreamy fashion to the far-away Spanish Main and the pirates bold who, in the olden time, sailed its sunlit waters with their smuggled cargoes of fragrant rum and molasses. He was probably part Portuguese,—at any rate he was an exotic, and did not remain many years in Waverley, disappearing at last in that unaccountable manner in which the human flotsam drifts into and out of our consciousness almost unnoticed.

Our good colored people had their own corners in the churches, and all the older ones were, as a rule, found in their places on Sunday. Their small, white-washed cabins usually contained two rooms and sometimes a lean-to kitchen. The "front room," or parlor, had either a bare floor as clean as soap and water and faithful scouring could make it, or a gaily striped rag carpet. A bed occupied one corner; often there were two beds with large white pillows and a bright quilt or old-time coverlet tucked carefully beneath the generous "feather bed," which was the pride of the mother's heart. Several "split"-bottom chairs stood primly against the wall, and very likely there was a cherished bureau of black walnut surmounted by a mirror in whose surface strangely distorted countenances gazed into our own. The table usually had a white muslin cover, and on this stood the big glass lamp, its bowl often beautified by a gorgeous wad of pink or red cotton-wool immersed in the oil. At the windows were green paper shades with pictured borders; these shades were rolled up in the daytime and securely tied with a cord and tassels or, if the cord and tassels were worn out as often happened, a piece of string did duty instead.

I count it a peculiar privilege to have known



these picturesque, old people who were wonderfully interesting and attractive, especially so to children. A little story by way of illustration. Small Johnnie Hamilton was visiting his grandfather, who owned a number of slaves. Of course, Miss Fanny's little boy was made much of by the good-natured blacks, who seemed to know intuitively the way to a child's heart. One day when dinner was ready the small Johnnie failed to appear, and search was immediately made for him with considerable anxiety, as wells were deep and mules and horses numerous. In the midst of the confusion, however, Master John appeared at the door of one of the cabins, napkin in hand, and with his mouth full of food shouted to his relieved and worshipping mother and aunts, "Go on with your dinner—I'm eating with he niggers."

Our better class of Waverley negroes had many fine qualities, and nearly all of them retained an abiding pride in the name and fame of their former masters which was very touching. They had no desire to break down the barriers between the races, for no self-respecting negro wished to associate with white people on terms of equality. In humble fashion, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, they lived their quiet, useful lives among us, respected and befriended by all, partakers to a greater or lesser degree in every occasion of joy or sorrow among high or low. All, or nearly all, have long ago disappeared from the scene of their former activities, and with them passed forever a generation whose like we shall not see again.

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Sometimes on a beautiful spring day, when we neighbor children were happily playing tag or drop the handkerchief in the wide, quiet street, a sudden half-suppressed exclamation from some startled youngster would cause us all to stop, look quickly around and behold that which made the bravest run precipitately for home and from that sheltered haven, peer out with wide frightened eyes on a sight many of us never forgot. Down the long hill, walking noiselessly in the middle of the street, looking neither to the right nor to the left, came a band of fifty or sixty stalwart Indians. They were arrayed in all their distinctive pageantry of nodding feathers, bright colored blankets, fringed leggins and gaily beaded moccasins. Tall and straight as arrows and seemingly knowing no



fatigue, they kept straight on their way and were soon lost to view around the corner of Mr. Norton's store. Then, when the last fluttering blanket disappeared from our frightened but eager sight, we breathed freely once more and besieged our patient mother with all sorts of questions concerning them. The fear of being captured and carried away was always present with us, and we thought little Jimmie Young had lately had a very narrow escape.

I now shrewdly suspect that the Indians were not nearly so anxious to possess our small, useless selves as the sorely tried and harassed mothers would have had us believe. However, Jimmie was down on the Elkhorn one spring morning gathering gooseberries from a large bush, when, on moving around to find a better place, he was almost petrified with horror to discover a tall Indian standing only a few feet away quietly eating from the same bush. Poor Jimmie, who was only eight, stood not upon the order of his going, but retired at once and raced madly home, leaving his dusky companion in full possession.

We were not quite so much afraid of the Indian squaws, for they occasionally visited the homes to sell their elaborate bead work and curiously woven baskets. True to their love for vivid colors, they were usually attired in bright red calico wrappers and frowsy shawls, their coarse, black hair hanging in long untidy braids. Laden with their wares and carrying the ubiquitous pappoose they trailed from house to house utterly oblivious, for any sign they gave, of our furtive glances and stealthy but determined pursuit, as agog with curiosity, we followed as near as we dared.

The warriors or braves were much more interesting, but in early days we never saw them except when they marched through in state on their pilgrimage or embassy to the city of the Great Father at Washington. These were probably from the Kickapoo or Sac and Fox reservations twelve or fifteen miles away. They were fine looking men and with their gay blankets and trappings formed a picturesque procession along the quiet streets that seldom saw anything more exciting than a drunken man or a gigantic old-time threshing machine drawn by ten or twelve straining horses.

The Kickapoos were among the most intelli-



gent and industrious of the aboriginal tribes then settled in Kansas. This was attributed to the influence of Kenekuk, the Kickapoo prophet who came to the territory with the tribe and founded a religious sect among them, teaching them sobriety and industry and practicing the same himself.

In later years these Indians, or others, were induced to attend the annual county fair as an attraction. They came with their tents and ponies, their squaws and pappooses, and were installed in one part of the ample grounds, where they attracted many visitors. The red calico squaws sat in the sunshine with their little ones or went stolidly about their simple tasks. The men, impassive, as usual, stood around or walked about smoking their pipes. None paid the slightest attention to the curious throng who constantly surrounded their tents, gazing with wonder, not unmixed with disgust, upon the rude housekeeping and the long strips of freshly slaughtered beef dangling from poles and drying, covered with flies, in the September sun.

One of Waverley's prominent citizens, Mr. Douglas, had been in years gone by a plainsman and quite familiar with Indian languages and customs. With his thin, swarthy face, high cheekbones and the heavy dark shawl he always wore instead of an overcoat, he looked himself not unlike an Indian, a distinction of which, like John Randolph of Roanoke, he was very proud. When the red warriors on the opening day of the fair rode in all their richest gewgaws down the crowded Main street, Mr. Douglas, well mounted and shawled, rode by the side of the chief, as impassive and distinguished as his companion. At the fair grounds he was often with them and even took part once or twice in their dances, to the consternation of his gay and fashionable daughters and their elegant city friends. Mr. Douglas was really a very intelligent and companionable man, a fine lawyer as well as an enthusiastic farmer and pomologist. Aside from the distinction of setting out the first large apple orchard near Waverley, he delighted in good books and taught his family to love them. When his eldest daughter Evangeline, to please him, committed to memory the whole of Pope's "Essay on Man," he presented her with a fine gold watch in token of his appreciation. He also encouraged her in



the study of law, in which she was able to pass the usual examination. To his friendly interest in a young school girl's reading I owe my first introduction to the delightful "Knight of La Mancha," he kindly lending me his own valued copy of Don Quixote with an earnest recommendation of its humor and excellence, which, it is needless to say, I proved to my intense and lasting delight.

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A very welcome visitant was the annual apple wagon from the rich orchards of old Missouri. Fortunately the soil and climate of Waverley were such as to bring forth in rich abundance the kindly fruits of the earth. The beautiful blue-grass grew everywhere. People cut it and piled it in loads to take home to sod their lawns. Trees were of wonderfully quick growth, especially the maples and cottonwoods, which grew tall and stately in that favored clime. Along the creeks and river were natural groves of forest and nut-bearing trees, while gooseberries, blackberries and hazel bushes offered their tempting contributions to the oft-timed scanty pioneer larder. At the time of which I write, however, there were no bearing orchards and fruit was very scarce. Now Waverley and its vicinity excel as a fruit growing country, and the delightful old town is surrounded by flourishing orchards of cherries, apples and peaches, whose blossoming converts the whole region every spring into a paradise of beauty and fragrance. But at the time of which I am thinking there were no orchards and the lack of fruit was a very real privation to the pioneers and their children, the latter especially growing exceedingly tired of the tough dried apples and peaches, which we justly considered a miserable substitute and a gross libel on the name of fruit.

No sympathetic reader then will wonder at our jubilation when some glorious autumn afternoon we beheld, creaking down upon us, a heavily laden wagon with its tell-tale sign, a big, rosy-cheeked apple, perched aloft upon a stout stick. "Here comes the apple wagon!" we would yell, and forgetting our play in the delights of anticipation we would rush into the house and give mother no peace until she presently issued forth and entered into negotiations with the driver, who, be it remembered to his credit, often bestowed a sample of his delicious wares all around in advance of his sale.



Mothers would sometimes tell their listening youngsters about the lucious pears that grew so abundantly in the old home orchards, but many Kansas children never even saw that russet fruit until years later, and then usually in small quantities at most exorbitant prices. The soft, "squishy" paw-paw, with its yellow sweetness and coarse, black seeds, was a favorite with many, but it took strangers some time to learn to like it. An orange was considered the rarest of treats reserved usually for sickness or as a sufficient reward for unexceptionable behaviour; while in our part of the grassy quadrangle, at least, the indispensable banana of today was absolutely unknown.

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People always went to market armed with a basket of generous dimensions. Delivery wagons were unknown in Waverley, and I well remember my first experience with that most useful institution. When I was about twelve I visited a city for the first time. My mind was full of joyful anticipations, tempered somewhat by the memory of mother's parting admonition not to stare about open-mouthed, nor point at anything strange, nor in any other way expose my rusticity to the unsympathetic smiles and jeers of the scornful city populace. I promised with unusual docility to obey, and as I climbed into the buggy which was to convey me to the metropolis, I sturdily made up my small mind to conduct myself with the haughty and frigid decorum which is only too often the sole resource of the unsophisticated; and to evince neither fear nor astonishment, though the very heavens themselves should fall at my feet.

After a long and delightful drive we found ourselves in the vicinity of miles and miles of railroad tracks lying parallel to each other, and many more locomotives than I supposed the world contained, belching forth their black smoke as they darted back and forward to the accompaniment of clanging bells and shrieking whistles.

Escaping from this pandemonium by the very skin of our teeth, as it seemed to me, we were presently driving along a quiet shaded street which abounded in the most picturesque houses, many of which were perched so high above the street that long flights of steps had been built up the steep incline to their very doors. As I looked about me with delight still tempered with dignity,



the city began to rise in my estimation, and I hoped that Mrs. Howard lived in one of those romantic houses overlooking the quietly busy thoroughfare, that I might have the pleasure of running up and down the steps and enjoying to the full such an undreamed of experience. Mrs. Howard's house, however, proved to be a pleasant farm-like place, comparatively level, and on the very edge of the city.

The first afternoon she took me with her on a shopping tour and I enjoyed the first ride of my life in the old horse-cars which were long since superseded by the cable and later the electrics. We visited the City Market where, in spite of my resolution to allow nothing to surprise me out of my good behavior, I stared aghast at the worlds of meats, poultry and vegetables displayed, and wondered audibly how they would ever be sold or eaten. Mrs. Howard made a purchase now and then and I finally awoke to the fact that she had no market-basket and neither did she carry any of the articles which she had selected with considerable care. My surprise increased until on reaching her home several hours later, it changed to astonishment to find the numerous parcels safe and sound, nothing forgotten or omitted, and all arranged in good order on the kitchen table by modern genii in the form of delivery boys.

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Sometimes on rainy days, or on the rare occasions when mother was away from home, we had the dear delight of rummaging, unmolested, among sundry trunks and boxes, which were usually forbidden territory.

Among these was a fascinating little trunk whose interesting contents we were never weary of examining. It was of dark red cowhide with the hair left on and it was studded all over with bright, brass-headed nails. It was a cherished heir-loom which, with a real bell-metal preserving kettle, had been given to mother by her Virginia grandmother whose namesake she was.

Inside the little trunk was a cherished collection of quaint, old-time finery,—laces yellow from long disuse, queer ribbons with picot edges, discarded furs, gloves and collars of antique appearance, and an ebony casket containing a few treasured letters, delightful wedding-cards embellished with white doves and tied with dainty white ribbons, and most interesting of all, a number of



ancient daguerrrotypes of various aunts and uncles whom we had never seen but of whom we had heard any number of interesting stories.

In this trunk was a black taffeta gown with wonderful puffings; there were fringed silk mantillas and a white crepe shawl, which was to us the acme of beauty. There was a rich black and white plaid of heavy silk which would almost "stand alone," and another of the most exquisite shadings and blendings of green and gray.

We would importune mother for stories as to when and where she had worn the various garments and sometimes, but very seldom, she would gratify us. There was one beautiful white dress with sheer lacy squares which she wore about the year 1856, and with it a white silk shawl or perhaps a black silk mantilla and rich black lace mitts, than which there could be no more becoming adjunct to a beautiful hand. Sometimes mother told us about her Virginia grandmother who once came to visit them, bringing with her one special trunk full of silk dresses to be made over for nine or ten-year old mother and her younger sisters. We loved to hear those stories of her childhood and how she visited with this same grandmother an old-time Kentucky mansion in whose drawing-room on each side of the great fireplace hung the life-size portrait of an uncle whose eyes possessed the uncanny power of following her everywhere she moved until she grew afraid to venture alone into the silent and stately room with its tall, close-shuttered windows and its watchful portraits.

The brass-headed trunk seemed to have somehow a charm to call up reminiscences and stories from the long-gone past. The grandmother of the trunk and the portraits could write poetry, one fragment of which has been treasured by her descendants through the generations; but there was another grand-dame of a different mold whom we loved to hear about. She was a notable housewife and a hard task-mistress to her servants, so much so, in fact, that it is said that some of them in their resentment bestowed upon her the euphonious sobriquet of "Annie Devil." We fancied in our unregenerate minds that this ancestress might well be the more interesting of the two, and even now at times when the best laid plans come to naught, and life for the moment seems but a weariness of the flesh and a vexation



of the spirit, I wonder if perchance the sins of that stern old great-great grandmother are being visited upon the shrinking heads of her children unto the third and fourth generations.

To go back to the trunk and its treasures, however,—Mrs. Robinson says that when she came west in the fifties she was much surprised to find in the stores of St. Louis and other western towns as fine and even finer dress goods than could be purchased in the city of Boston. She tells us of her surprise at finding in those far western stores an especially choice fabric, the duplicate of which a friend had just brought home in triumph from Paris, supposing there was nothing as fine to be had in the large cities of the east, to say nothing of the remote and supposedly half-civilized frontier of despised and maligned Missouri.

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Our hats and the greater part of our dry-goods and groceries as well came from Mr. Norton's big store. In this store had been from time out of mind the post-office, which occupied a narrow space in one corner. There were just two important-looking lock-boxes, one of which belonged to the veteran editor of the leading paper, Mr. Franklin. We youngsters were very fond of stopping at the office on our way from school, and it was an impressive sight to see Mr. Franklin enter the store, and without even a glance at the autocrat who handled the mail, or a word of explanation or apology, take a key from his pocket, unlock his box, take therefrom an armful of mail, and hurry away; while we were obliged to give the number of our boxes, or most humiliating of all, wait with the best grace we could summon while some clerk leisurely and with an air of vast importance, went through the pile of letters, turning to us usually with the discouraging "There's nothing for you."

We were so accustomed to the narrow limits of our post-office that we naturally supposed all others must be similar, for we of old Waverley held a high opinion of the importance and general excellence of our birthplace and its various institutions. Mary Harper was one of us, having been born and reared in the same house. When she was about seventeen she went to visit relatives in a small, very new town in western Kansas. On going to the post-office soon after her arrival



she was almost struck dumb with astonishment to find that useful institution occupying the entire lower floor of a two-story building all to itself, having no dry-goods or groceries connected with it. Mary declared that the five months of her stay had nearly elapsed before she became at all accustomed to what seemed to her a reckless extravagance and waste of space.



## Chapter The Sixth

### OLD WAVERLEY SCHOOLS

A plain wooden school building of one room served the youth of Waverley for about ten years, when the riotous children of all ages from three to twenty-two or three, finally overflowed its bounds to such an extent that the powers that were began to plan a new and much larger building. This was of brick, and was erected several blocks away from the old one near the church and on the brow of a noble hill that sloped abruptly down at an angle that made the most splendid coasting.

One bright spring day when the new edifice was nearly completed we children led by our proud and happy teacher, marched joyously past it in a kind of triumphal procession, singing to the tune of "John Brown's Body," and at the top of our voices, each striving valiantly to out-yell his neighbor,

"Now three cheers for the new School Building,  
As we go marching on!"

It stood tall and square and imposing on the brow of the hill, a decided contrast to the now despised school-house of our past; and on the long looked-for first Monday in September we all gleefully hastened to the new academy with its two grand stairways, its white, unmarred walls, smooth, shining blackboards, and the fine new patent desks with delightful little ink-wells snugly ensconced therein,—and remorselessly abandoned the old house to its desolation and its memories.

What merry crowds its shabby old roof had sheltered,—little boys, big boys and grown young men with their higher arithmetics and Latin grammars; young ladies, many of whom were aproned school girls in day time and society belles in the evening at party or dance; and hosts of little ones as young as three. The old school-house was so near our home that I sent myself to school at that tender age, and I can dimly remember the lesson in my beloved primer about a small boy named Tom, and a little girl named May and her faithful kid. May was shown in the picture rolling a hoop with the kid in close attendance. Rolling a hoop was the fashionable diversion among all the school-book girls. That little battered



primer would now be worth its weight in gold, as would also the second and third readers of good old McGuffey's series.

I owned a spelling-book, too at a very early age; and I remember studying after many tiresome pages of uninteresting words of one syllable, the lesson beginning with "lady," and how proud I was to be in words of two syllables,—and as for that word lady I loved it. Small as I was, it looked to me just as a word with such a delightful meaning ought to look, and visions of feminine grace and beauty occupied my mind as I sat on the old home-made bench behind the big wood-stove that dominated the center of the room, while the busy routine of a crowded country school of the olden time went on unnoticed about me.

\* \* \* \*

Meantime the solitary weather-beaten old house in its weed-grown yard was left to itself, and an air of desolation and decay gradually pervaded the place. One bright summer afternoon a group of idle children of the neighborhood were playing about as usual, amusing themselves by building play-houses in the fascinating hollows and gullies which abounded in that lonely part of town.

Tiring at last of play, one adventurous urchin suggested that we invade the old school-house, which was immediately done, the battered door with its broken knob and gaping key-hole offering little resistance.

Curiously we stared about the forsaken seminary. The interior was cheerless and desolate in the extreme, and filled with that uncanny odor peculiar to old, abandoned houses. The plaster had fallen from walls and ceiling and lay in forlorn heaps on the splintered floor and the broken and overturned benches and desks, which were further littered with torn and dirty school-books, empty ink bottles and broken and frameless slates.

On the floor around the long demolished rusty stove were ashes, old sheep-skin erasers and the stumps of two or three ancient brooms. A battered tin water bucket and a broken chair or two decorated the corner nearest the door. The home-made desks and seats were rudely carved and otherwise defaced by innumerable jack-knives and branded with the names and initials of their former tenants. The plaster blackboard was full of holes, exposing the grinning laths and the frail



weather-boarding beyond; while through the tall, staring west windows, bereft alike of glass and sash, streamed the afternoon sun in broad bands of light on the dust-laden floor.

After looking around in a desultory sort of way, we began to search diligently among the ruins for we knew not what, until at last Rosa Meade secured a treasure in the form of a tattered and torn McGuffey's Fifth Reader; and as the member of the party who could come nearest to pronouncing most of the words, the fragment was handed to me and I was forthwith commanded to read aloud. Accordingly we all seated ourselves with a sublime indifference to the welfare of our clothing on the broken platform around the ruins of what had once been the teacher's desk, and after looking carefully through the pages I began to read a poem which I had heard the older pupils read in school, and which possessed a wonderful fascination through its very excess of horror.

"If you ever should come to Modena," it began in a delightfully friendly and confidential manner, as though our going to Modena were the most natural and likely thing in the world. I succeeded in getting past "Reggio" without much ado, and then floundered between the Scylla of "Donati" on one side and the dreadful Charybdis of "Zampieri" on the other, but after they were left behind I had comparatively smooth sailing. The room was very still, and I was reading amid the breathless attention of my audience those portentous words,—I quote from memory—

"Full fifty years were past and all forgotten,  
When on an idle day, a day of search  
'Mid the old lumber in the gallery  
That mouldering chest was noticed, and 'twas  
said

By one as young, as thoughtless as Ginevra,  
'Why not remove it from its lurking place?'  
'Twas done as soon as said, but on the way it  
burst,—

It fell,—and lo! a *skeleton!*"

"Hush!" came in a terrified whisper from Rosa, "What was that?" A loose board blown by the wind; or was it a skurrying rat from the near-by granary? The sound broke in upon our excited nerves like the crack of doom. Flinging the book I knew not where, we all with one accord, moved by an unreasoning terror, rushed headlong



from the house, piercing the drowsy afternoon with our screams. Even now I never read or hear of "Ginevra" without a slight tingling of the nerves as I recall that summer day episode in the abandoned school-house, whose crumbling walls had that day sheltered us for the last time.

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In the fine new school-house "Professor" Stone held the reins of government, assisted by two young ladies, Miss Brown and Miss Hammond. Miss Brown was our teacher. She had beautiful hands, dainty and soft and adorned with rings, while her gold watch chain bore a number of ornaments, among which an exquisite miniature teapot eclipsed even the watch in our loving admiration.

Like Elizabeth of the German Garden we suddenly became aware of the grimy appearance of our own small paws, though hardly in our case to the detriment of our souls; and we soon made a vast improvement in that respect, for a pretty young lady teacher was a novelty to us who had hitherto been almost exclusively under the stern tutelage of bearded men, and all her pleasant ways and stylish clothes were closely observed.

We, too, began to long for adornment, and Clara White became the cynosure of our envious eyes, having succeeded in coaxing from her mother the loan of two or three plain gold rings, which were, however, so much too large that she was obliged to submit to the humiliation of keeping them in place by a paltry bead ring of home manufacture. These bead rings were very popular with those of us who had no others and the prettiest had a larger red or blue bead for a set. Somewhat allied to the bead rings were the "charm strings" of odd and pretty buttons in which our souls delighted. We sometimes begged the merchants for their odds and ends of suitable buttons, often making ourselves nuisances no doubt.

To keep their hands white and soft many of the girls wore morocco "half-hands," which covered the hands but left the fingers free to use pencil or crayon. They were nicely pinked around the edges and at sixty or seventy-five cents a pair helped to enrich the coffers of the village harness-maker.

One pleasant custom we had which was quite in line with modern thought was that of dancing quadrilles at noon and recess in the large unfin-



ished upper hall. This was introduced by the older girls and was such fascinating pastime that it quite overshadowed for a while our old games of "drop the handkerchief," "King William," "black man" and "whip-crack." The last was so rough that after several accidents it was sternly forbidden by the principal.

One summer two young ladies conducted separate schools in Waverley, each teacher with her flock occupying one of the lower rooms in the new building. Whether these teachers were friends or foes I cannot say, but I well remember that the pupils of both were in a continual quarrel. We had our recesses at different times and Miss Jones' pupils would at their play time pound on our door apparently without rebuke or hindrance from her. At last one joyous day, Miss Warren, our teacher, on dismissing us for recess, said smilingly, "Now, children, you may return the compliment," and no hint was ever more quickly taken. With unholy glee we galloped down the hall and belabored the enemy's quarters without mercy, pounding the heavy door until it was a wonder we did not break it in. The only other recollection I have of this school is of receiving a prize for the most headmarks in spelling, and of my intense disappointment at being given a book about "The Environs of Jerusalem" instead of the interesting story-book I had fondly hoped for.

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The new school-house soon became a part of our daily life so that it, too, has its precious memories of auld lang syne. Just across the wide, quiet street was the peaceful, gray church with its grassy yard and waving trees. The grass was allowed to grow tall and rank, for the day of the lawn-mower had not yet dawned on Waverley.

Often we girls, whom the swift-flying years had now transformed in our turn into the "big girls," and who had about given up our childish romping,—often we would wander at noon or recess into those classic environs remote from rude encroachment to indulge in the confidential talks so dear to feminine hearts, whether young or old. Here one lovely October day, when the mellow haze of the Indian summer rested like a benediction over glowing hill and dale, Orella Moore and I took our dinner-pails and ensconcing ourselves comfortably on a cushion of thick, springy grass in the delicious sunshine leisurely discussed our



lunch and then fell to talking of people and places she had seen. Orella had traveled around a good deal with her parents before they finally settled down near Waverley, and her bright descriptions of their various wanderings were delightful indeed to us stay-at-homes, most of whom had been born in good old Waverley and knew the great outside world only by the merest hearsay.

After some unimportant, fragmentary conversation, Orella remarked rather suddenly, "We used to live in a house in Virginia where George Washington had lived." This startling statement interested me at once and I immediately began to ply her with questions. She said that the house was a large and stately mansion, but to my intense disappointment she could not remember distinctly the features of the place as she was very young when they occupied it. On thing, however, she had not forgotten—the beautiful ceilings, elaborately decorated with all kinds of birds and flowers reproduced thereon. We talked upon this fascinating subject, or rather she talked and I listened and questioned until the unwelcome clangor of the big bell summoned us reluctant back to school. This strange and totally unexpected association of Orella with the distant haunts of the father of our country so impressed me that I never forgot the conversation and the wonderful pictured ceilings.

Years passed, we grew up and separated,—and long after among the charming books that helped to while away a summer vacation in the mountains, I ran across an interesting article on Kenmore, the home of Washington's sister, Mistress Betty Lewis. Gradually, a sort of vague, shadowy reminiscence seemed to float, as it were, mistily into my mind, as of something heard long before as in a dream, and then the thought, "Why, this must be the very house Orella Moore was trying to describe to me that day in the church-yard." The thought once entertained, like Banquo's ghost, would not down, and the desire to settle this tantalizing question became so insistent that I finally wrote to Virginia, though with but faint hopes of learning anything definite after so long a time.

I had just about despaired of an answer to my inquiry, when to my delight I received a very cordial and interesting letter from the owner of the place giving me the wished-for information.



My surmise was correct,—some thirty or more years previous a Northern family had occupied historic Kenmore for a few years, their rather unusual ways and methods having attracted in that staid old community sufficient attention to insure their being remembered. The charming chatelaine of Kenmore also sent me some fine photographs of the place, which are highly prized and which show one of the famous ceilings which cost the poor British soldier his life. To be sure Washington never lived at Kenmore, but was doubtless often a visitor to his only sister, and his venerable mother after declining repeated invitations to make her home with Mrs. Lewis, finally died in one of its spacious chambers. How passing strange it seems that there should be ever so slight a connecting link between the little, bright-faced school-girl in that grassy, wind-swept Kansas churchyard so long ago, and the stately Virginia mansion of Washington's only sister, but even so they are forever joined together in my memory.



## Chapter The Seventh

### "FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD'S IGNOBLE STRIFE."

A great many of the Waverley people made no secret of the fact that they thought the Moores were very peculiar. Originally from the far East they had after many years of wanderings through different parts of the United States at last settled down in the outskirts of our little Western town where they bought a good-sized farm, which they planted mostly in fruit. Here they built a tall, forbidding looking house which, like its inmates, was exceedingly odd and totally unlike any other, either great or small, in the neighborhood. Even while it was still new it had a lonely, half-deserted look with its windowless gable toward the avenue, the entrances all being on the side. It was full of mysterious closets in the most unexpected places, and queer little recesses and cubboards in the walls and stairway, very interesting and delightful in broad daylight, but fearful indeed to contemplate when darkness came. I often visited the Moores for they were kind and hospitable and I liked them in spite of, or perhaps it was because of, their odd ways, but I would not have stayed all night there, as I often did with the other girls, for anything they could offer.

Their large parlor with its old-fashioned sofas and tables had an antiquated look, not at all unpleasing, and on the walls were several ancient pictures,—one of a woman whose dark eyes followed me everywhere I turned with a haunting persistency that was most uncanny; and that served better than words to explain mother's childish fear of the watchful uncles at which I had formerly wandered. I never learned anything of the original of the painting but I still remember the penetrating red-brown eyes with their sinister and baffling expression.

Mrs. Moore was a small active woman with a nervous, hurried manner, that somehow gave one the impression that she was always out of breath. She possessed one distinction exceedingly rare in old Waverley,—she was a graduate of an Eastern seminary. I remember Orella once reading to a group of interested school-girls, most of whom had never seen a real live graduate—magic word—her mother's discolored commencement essay with



its faded time-worn blue ribbon. We all thought it a wonderful production and some of us rather envied Orella the unique possession of a valedictorial mother; but at the same time it required a strong effort of the imagination to picture faded, middle-aged Mrs. Moore in her rich but antiquated silks as one of a bevy of bright-eyed school-girls in dainty white swisses and blue ribbons.

However, Orella, who seemed to love her mother devotedly, once showed me an old daguerreotype which revealed a beautiful, proud girl with clear dark eyes and a broad, low forehead shaded by rich waves of cloudy hair;—dressed in shimmering silk and lace, while long, black silk mitts covered the slender hands and arms. The picture, which was strikingly modern, expressed youth, beauty and pride with a certain clear-eyed purity; all a startling contrast to the Mrs. Moore of the present, who just then appeared in the doorway from some homely task, changed so sadly by age and toil and care from her radiant, sheltered girlhood.

A crowd of us were once merrily talking of the rich and famous men we expected to marry and such idle chatter, when she suddenly said with much earnestness, "You think too much of money," adding with an effort, "I married a man whom I could not look in the face,—because he was rich." Poor Mr. Moore with his gray hair and silence—perhaps life had cheated him too—he never said, but one autumn day he went out from Waverley and was never heard of afterward.

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Their house was literally running over with books and old magazines, and they were very generous about lending them. Orella would sometimes bring an especially interesting book to school and I would joyfully smuggle it into the house and spend my evenings poring over its enchanted pages to the great detriment of my eyes and my Latin, which was the first recitation in the morning. I can still see some of those old books and remember well the happy hours I passed with them for my companions. There was "Les Miserables," in which the pathetic story of Fantine and poor, little Cosette and the unspeakable Jondrettes had to be picked out piecemeal from the interminable pages of dull politics or duller speculation. Another favorite which I



read and re-read was George Sand's "Consuelo" and "Countess of Rudolstadt," with their medieval setting of gloomy German castles and dark-eyed, romantic noblemen, the impish Zdenko and frightful subterranean passages leading no one knew whither; both books abounding in mysteries, perilous adventures and hair-breadth escapes, enough for half a dozen novels of these degenerate days.

Then there were some of Wilkie Collins's novels of mystery and Poe's exquisite poems and weird prose tales, among which "The Gold Bug" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" lingered longest in the memory.

One shabby book with a faded, dull-brown cover, contained the old-fashioned, pathetic story of the beautiful, unfortunate "Eliza Wharton or The Coquette," which though then but dimly understood, was certainly enough to drive all thoughts of coquetry forevermore from the mind of the most incorrigible flirt.

It was also in some book of theirs that I came across the strangely prophetic poem in which William Cullen Bryant expressed the wish that it might be in the month of leafy June

"The sexton's hand my grave to make

The rich green forest turf should break."

Its melody haunted me and I committed the beautiful lines to memory. I often wondered if the wish so exquisitely told would be granted, and so was not a little impressed when the daily papers about the middle of June, 1878, chronicled the great poet's sudden death in New York.

Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that Orella and I finally tried our hands at novel-writing. We wrote diligently at home when we should have been learning our neglected lessons, and then read our productions aloud to each other at noon and recess in the seclusion of the beloved church yard. My story, at least, accomplished some good in this weary world but in scarcely the manner I expected when I wrote it. Years after, one dull winter evening, the landlady of the hotel where I was living was suffering with a severe headache. The pilgrims who for a short time and a liberal compensation had condescended to supervise the culinary department, were about to move on to new and untried scenes, and Mrs. Marshall was a prey to gloomy despair added to the tortures of illness. Some vagrant word or suggestion brought to my mind that childish story and



I began to relate it in all its various amplifications. The scene began in an old rambling English castle on the rocky coast of Devonshire overhanging the ocean, as Sir Walter has described Tantallon, and the never ceasing roar and surge of the restless waves formed an imposing background for the scenes of love and jealousy that took place within its gloomy stone walls.

Later on the interest shifted to an abandoned French chateau, and lastly to London where a convenient murder or two served to rid the distracted author of a number of superfluous characters, and left the heroine (myself) in triumphant possession of the stage.

Mrs. Marshall laughed so heartily as the absurd parody was related that her husband heard her where he sat among the loungers in the office, and hurried in the parlor to learn the meaning of our hilarity. "I haven't heard Mary laugh like that for ten years," he said as he chucked her under the chin;—and she declared that her headache was entirely cured—that I had charmed it away with my marvelous romance.

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"Come to see us," said Mrs. Moore one snowy January day when I met her in the street. She was an odd figure in her long woolen cloak and close-fitting, knitted hood, such as no one else wore. I thought of the beautiful daguerrotype as she repeated in her strange, insistent manner, "Come to see us. We have warmth and light and books and music, and we shall be glad to share them with you."

I did not go that winter, being away from home much of the time, but one delicious summer afternoon when the balmy air was full of drowsy murmurs and redolent with sweet scents, sister and I strolled leisurely out along the grassy avenue to pass an hour or two among the grapevines and roses. The time flew fast in pleasant conversation and in listening to Orella's music taught her by her mother; and when we at last rose to go all insisted so earnestly on our staying for supper that we finally consented. And such a supper as it was. The round tea table was spread with the finest and whitest of damask; the old-fashioned silver glittered in the rays of the western sun, and the ancestral china with its decorations of dainty moss rosebuds was of eggshell



thinness and delicacy, rivalling the living roses in the cut-glass vases.

The viands were in keeping;—tender chicken delicately browned, flaky biscuit with golden butter, and fragrant tea with the richest cream; these with various translucent preserves and jellies made a most delicious repast to which our appetites did ample justice.

There is something in the memory of this dainty yet bountiful meal—perhaps as much as anything a sort of intangible resemblance between the hosts of each, that continually brings to mind that most delightful of all recorded breakfasts—the morning scene in the old house of the seven gables, where the gaunt spinster, Hepzibah, and the sorely stricken Clifford, with the little bright-faced country cousin, sit down in the ancient, oak-panelled breakfast parlor beneath the frowning gaze of their stern Puritan ancestor to the appetizing broiled mackerel, with which poor Hepzibah achieved such a culinary triumph; the fragrant Mocha coffee worth its weight in gold, Phebe's delicious golden corn cake made from her mother's cherished recipe, and enriched by her freshly churned country butter redolent of the sweep of summer breezes across wide fields of clover. Nor must I omit to mention the exquisite fragrance of the dewy rose, the balmy breath of the early breeze stealing gently through the open window, and the golden beam of morning sunlight falling athwart the table like a heavenly benediction.

\* \* \* \*

I can close my eyes and see once more the crowded afternoon Sunday School in the dear old church. The superintendent and the long suffering teachers are intent upon the lesson and its exposition. Each class is well filled with girls and boys,—the former dimpling and fluttering in all the finery they can muster, from fifteen year-old Kate Barnes' lace handkerchief and Mary Warren's little black velvet jacket, of which we were all secretly envious, to Orella Moore's shimmering silk and brown kid gloves.

Myra sits by my side,—Myra who is only thirteen and a beauty—her clear blue eyes sparkling with fun and mischief, her rich red-brown curls tossed carelessly back from her smooth, white forehead, her dainty French kid boots peeping from the edge of her blue cashmere skirt.



Outside the snow of a real December lies cold and wide, and touched with a faint, chilly glow as the wintry sun sinks toward the western sky, but in the church all is warmth and faint fragrance and subdued though busy murmur. Our attention wanders now and then from our Berean lesson leaves, for Christmas is close at hand and the boys who have been away at school or at work are home for the holidays. After the lesson is over and reviewed by the superintendent, the older members discuss various plans for the Christmas Sunday School festivities, while we with many giggles and glances of carefully studied indifference in the direction of the boys' class, consult together and lay our plans for divers parties and other gayeties, not forgetting the annual Christmas ball given by the Masons in their large hall, and which all the elite, both young and old, were expected to attend.

The older members decide at last, to the joy of all, that we shall have a Christmas tree. The secretary, a tall, sweet-faced girl with masses of soft brown hair, moves quickly from class to class jotting down with her little gold pencil the records of attendance and contribution. Mary Patterson, another brown-haired schoolmate, presides at the organ. The whispered consultations cease as the signal is given for all to rise. The song that was sung in closing that wintry day still comes echoing downward "through the slanting years, the stronger for the distance." The boys and girls of thirteen and fourteen who heard its melody are scattered far and wide, and many, the gayest and the loveliest, have long ere this proved its truth. Again and yet again the words repeat themselves and with them comes the pleasant picture of youth and care-free happiness as the fresh young voices ring clearly forth in the strangely prophetic song and refrain:

"There's a chorus ever sweet,  
And its echo rolls along  
Where the pure and holy meet  
In the land of love and song.  
Over yonder, over yonder,  
Hear the glad and joyful strain,  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
To the lamb for sinners slain."



Beneath the frowning, gray walls of an ancient castle across the sea is an old-time garden. Within its charmed enclosure the curious sight-seer may wander at will, delighting his soul in the beauty and fragrance of roses and lillies, gilly-flowers and eglantine; or resting in the sheltering embrace of a broken and rustic seat idly fall to dreaming of the pictures of the past which the surroundings are well calculated to inspire; peopling the winding paths and verdant bowers with the dainty highborn dames and noble lords who in days long flown held here their pomp and revelry.

In an open space nearly hidden by masses of low shrubs and clinging vines, is a quaint, old sun-dial around whose broken and time-worn rim the observant eye may still trace the half obliterated classic legend, "*Horas non numere nisi serenas*," which is, being interpreted, "I record none but hours of sunshine."



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